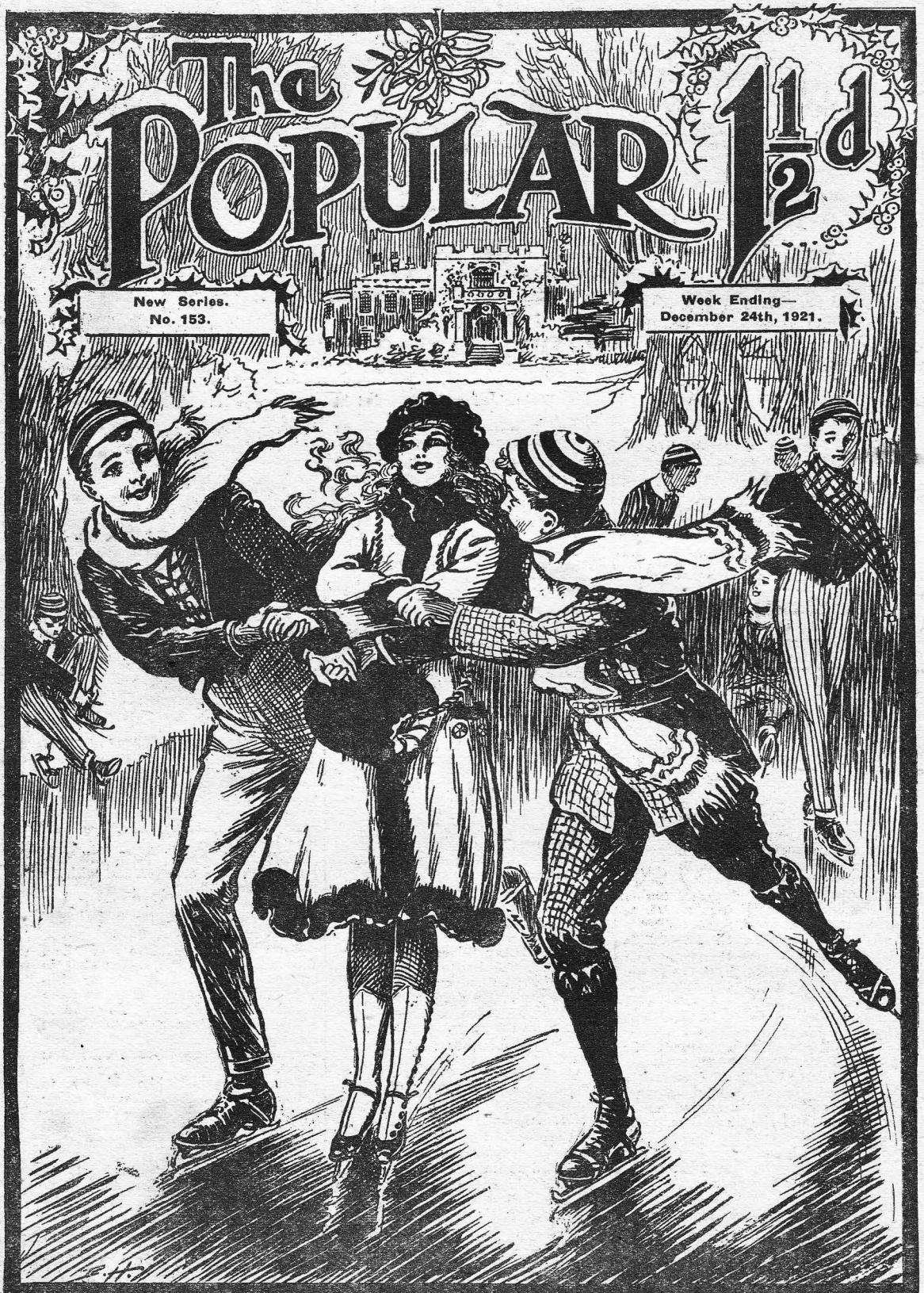


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(A MAGNIFICENT LONG COMPLETE CHRISTMAS STORY OF ROOKWOOD INSIDE.)



THE TRAITOR GUEST!

A Splendid, Long, Complete Christmas Story of JIMMY SILVER & CO. the Chums
:: :: of Rookwood. :: ::

By OWEN CONQUEST.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Just Like Jimmy!

"CHRISTMAS," said Jimmy Silver oracularly, "comes but once a year!"

"Go hon!" remarked

Lovell humorously.

"What a brain!" said Raby admiringly. "Did you work that out in your head, Jimmy? What a corker you ought to be at maths and things!"

And Newcome chuckled.

"Christmas," repeated the captain of the Rookwood Fourth calmly, "comes but once a year. Ergo—that's Latin—ergo, meaning, therefore—at Christmas-time a chap ought to forgive his enemies, if he's got any, and spread round his kindness and good will!"

"If he's got any!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Jimmy warmly. "The fact is—"

"Oh, I know!" said Lovell. "You're going to jaw us. Put it off till I've fetched Lattrey's ear with a snowball. He's just within range."

There had been a fall of snow, and the old quadrangle at Rookwood School glistened with white. There was snow on the old walls, on the old red roofs, and on the leafless branches of the beeches which were almost as ancient as Rookwood.

Arthur Edward Lovell stooped to gather up snow.

Lattrey of the Fourth, the most unpopular fellow at Rookwood, had just come along, "mooching" moodily in the quadrangle with his hands driven deep into his coat-pockets.

He did not glance towards the Fistical Four.

The outcast of Rookwood seemed to be buried in deep and gloomy thought, and he did not even notice the quartette of cheery juniors.

Naturally, as soon as he saw Lattrey, Lovell's impulse was to snowball him. So he gathered up some snow. Jimmy Silver frowned.

"Hold on, Lovell!" he said.

Lovell went on gathering snow, and kneading it into a specially compact snowball. That shot was going to be a success.

"The fact is, I was just thinking about Lattrey," said Jimmy Silver hastily. "That's why I was saying that—"

Lovell chuckled as he kneaded his snowball.

"Oh, I guessed that!" he said. "It's just like you, Jimmy. Lattrey is a sneak, a cad, a waster, a gambling blackguard, and not much better than a thief—if any better! All Rookwood's down on him, and he's sent to Coventry. He should have been kicked out of the school. We know the Head intended it, but Lattrey's pater got over him somehow. And, therefore—"

"Ergo!" grinned Raby.

"Ergo!" said Lovell. "Ergo, as he's all that, and more, you want to forgive him because it's Christmas-time, and take him to your waist-coat and weep over him. And we're not going to let you. You thumping idiot, only a few weeks back he nearly got you flogged with one of his dirty tricks."

"I—I know!"

"He ought to be sacked, and you know it! It's a mystery why the Head let him stay."

"Yes. But—"

"Bother your 'buts.' Don't begin butting me!" said Lovell crossly.

"I'm going to biff him on his flap!"

"Look here—"

Lovell's arm went up, and the snowball flew with deadly aim. Jimmy Silver jumped between.

Biff!

It was Jimmy Silver who got the snowball. He had not exactly intended that; he had only intended to stop the shot. He stopped it with his nose, as it happened, and roared, and sat down in the snow.

There was another roar from his chums.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat! Groogh!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lattrey looked round as he heard the roar, scowled, and stalked away. Lovell had no time for a second shot.

Jimmy Silver staggered to his feet, gasping. That shot, at such close range, had fairly bowled him over, and it hurt him. He glared at his hilarious chums.

"You thundering idiots!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look at my nose!"

"What a colour!" chortled Lovell.

"Serve you right! What did you get

in the way for? That toad's sneaked off now!"

"You asked for it, Jimmy!" grinned Newcome. "You fairly requested it! I say, let's go after Lattrey, and roll him in the snow!"

"Good egg!"

"Look here, listen to me!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Do listen!" urged Jimmy, dabbing away the powdered snow from his face. "You're coming home with me for Christmas, Lovell. I wish you other two were."

"So do I," said Raby. "But the pater wants me at home, and it's only fair for Newcome to come with me."

"Yes, some paters have queer tastes."

"Why, you ass—"

"But never mind that. You're coming with me, Lovell. My young cousin from High Coombe will be home—young Algy."

"I'm looking forward to making the acquaintance of Algernon," said Lovell solemnly. "I'm sure I shall enjoy the society of a Third Form fag from High Coombe, wherever that may be."

"Fathead! Look here, Lovell, suppose we take Lattrey home with us for Christmas?"

"What?" yelled Lovell.

"You're potty, Jimmy, old chap!" said Raby. "Draw it mild!"

Since the departure of Sam Barker, alias Gunter, as related in last week's story, Lattrey was without doubt the most untrustworthy rascal at Rookwood. To take a fellow like Lattrey home as a guest for the holidays would put a strain even upon Jimmy Silver's Christmas spirit.

But it was just like Jimmy to think of it. Lattrey was not going home for the holidays, as his father was away. He had the dismal prospect of spending Christmas at the deserted school.

Jimmy Silver had quite made up his mind to come to his rescue. The job was to get Lovell to see the matter in the same light.

But Jimmy Silver was nothing if not determined.

"Look here, Lovell," he said quietly, "you're going to be my guest for Christmas, and if you say you won't have Lattrey in the party—well, I won't ask him."

"Good!" said Lovell.
"But just listen to me a minute, old chap, while I tell you how I've figured it out," went on Jimmy quietly.
Lovell gave a groan, and listened. It took Jimmy Silver just five minutes to talk him over.

"Oh, have it your own way!" groaned Lovell resignedly at the end of that time. "You're an ass, Jimmy! You've got a soft heart, but your head's still softer. You can go and ask Lattrey in to tea, for all I care!"

"Good!" said Jimmy Silver. "You're a good chap, Lovell! I will!"

With a bright face, Jimmy Silver went off and knocked at the door of Lattrey's study.

Lattrey was in.
"Come along to the end study to tea, Lattrey," said Jimmy, with an encouraging smile. "It'll be ready in two ticks!"

Lattrey stared at him.
"What jape are you playing now?" he asked.

"Not a jape! I mean it! Come along," said Jimmy, with determined heartiness. "It's Christmas-time, you know, when people go in for—for peace and good will and—all-round friendliness and forgiveness."

"Do you believe in that rot?"

"Ahem! It isn't exactly rot, Lattrey." Jimmy's face was serious now. "You know what Christmas is, Lattrey. You know what it commemorates. We don't think so much about those things as we ought, perhaps, but at Christmas-time it comes into a chap's mind. It's hard lines if we can't bear with one another a little, and try to be forgiving."

Lattrey looked at him in wonder.
It was the first time he had ever heard Jimmy Silver speak in this way; such matters were not often discussed.

But Jimmy was grave and earnest, and perhaps for once an echo of decent feeling woke in Lattrey's hard heart. His face softened.

"You're a good chap, Silver," he said at last, and his voice had lost its sneering tone. "I'm sorry for—for some things, though it's too late to think of that now."

"It's never too late to mend," said Jimmy.

"I don't know that I want to mend," said Lattrey. "I'm not your sort. But—but I don't mind parting friends, if that's what you mean."

"No need to part just now. I'd like you to come home with me for the Christmas holidays, if you will."

Lattrey started.
"Is that a joke?" he asked.
"No; honest Injun."

"You don't want me. You mean, you're sorry for me for being stranded at school for the vacation," said Lattrey bitterly.

"Well, it's hard lines," said Jimmy. "You won't enjoy staying here, and as your father's away, I hear, you can't go home. Why not come home with me? I've asked Lovell, and he's agreeable."

There was silence.
Lattrey's face was brighter.
Jimmy's kind words came like a ray of light in the darkness that surrounded him. Perhaps at that moment there was regret, and a yearning for something better, in the breast of the cad of the Fourth.

"Well?" said Jimmy. "Better come, old scout."

"I—I thank you," faltered Lattrey. "It would be rotten staying here. I could go to my uncle's, but he doesn't like me. I don't want to. If—if you really mean it, Silver!" he faltered.

"Of course I do. It's a go, then?" asked Jimmy. "Come along to tea now."

Lattrey, almost like a fellow in a dream, followed Jimmy Silver to the end study.

He flushed as he entered that celebrated apartment and caught the curious glances of Lovell and Raby and Newcome.

But the Co. played up.
Lattrey was heartily welcomed, and he was feeling at his ease at last when the Fistical Four sat down to tea with him.

And it was settled. On the morrow Lattrey of the Fourth was going home with Jimmy Silver.

There was much surprise in the Classical Fourth when it was known. The fellows agreed that it was "just like Jimmy," and that Jimmy was an ass.

Of all the Fourth, only Kit Erroll seemed to think that Jimmy Silver was doing the right thing. Right or wrong, it was done; and when Rookwood School broke up for the holidays the next day, Lattrey departed with Jimmy and Lovell.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Home For the Holidays!

JIMMY SILVER'S home was a comfortable old place. His father and mother and his Cousin Phyllis greeted the schoolboys when they arrived at the Priory.

Lattrey was introduced, and warmly welcomed. Of Lattrey's reputation at Rookwood School Jimmy's people knew nothing. To them he was simply one of Jimmy's Form-fellows at the school.

Possibly his keen, sharp face and watchful eyes did not make a specially pleasant impression on them. But they made him very welcome.

Lattrey found himself quite comfortable, and in a home atmosphere that was very different from what he had been accustomed to. Unsuspecting kindness had not often come his way.

His father was a sharp and unscrupulous business man, and Lattrey had taken after him, and even at his early age his opinion of mankind was cynical and contemptuous.

Jimmy Silver's home was likely to do him good, if he was capable of getting the good out of his present surroundings.

Cousin Phyllis' bright eyes and bright smile were very pleasant, too.

When he went to bed that night Lattrey was thinking more seriously than he had ever thought before in his life. There were half resolves in his heart to make a better use of his life when he went back to Rookwood for the new term.

After all, the shady game did not even pay. To put it on the lowest ground, honesty was the best policy. His chances at school had been as good as Jimmy Silver's, and what had he made of them?

He was clever—he knew he was cleverer than Jimmy in many things. What he lacked was a sense of honour and straightness of character. And those could be acquired.

Lattrey came down the next morning in a cheery mood.

He joined in the skating with Jimmy and Lovell and Phyllis in the morning, and enjoyed himself thoroughly. In the afternoon there was an entertainment in the village, and the juniors went to help, with Phyllis, and Lattrey was as useful as any.

As they walked home in the winter dusk Lattrey was very silent. Jimmy

Silver dropped behind to join him, Lovell walking on with Phyllis.

"Tired?" asked Jimmy cheerily.
Lattrey shook his head.

"No; I've been thinking, Silver. I've been a confounded fool at Rookwood. I—I wish I could have my time there over again."

"You'll begin afresh next term," said Jimmy cordially. "All that Coventry business will be forgotten. You'll begin again like the rest."

"I—I suppose so. I mean to get clear of—of some things, and have a try, anyway. After all, Mornington made a fresh start, and he was pretty low down. I say—" Lattrey paused.

"Yes?"
"Your Cousin Phyllis is a ripping girl!" Lattrey paused again. "You know I'm rather a sharp chap, Silver—"

"A bit too sharp sometimes," said Jimmy. "Tain't good for a chap to be too sharp."

"I know that. I wish sometimes that I didn't see so deep," confessed Lattrey. "But in this case—well, there's something bothering your Cousin Phyllis. She's worried about something."

"My hat! I haven't noticed it. Come to think of it, I have, though," said Jimmy thoughtfully. "I—I wonder if it's her brother?"

"Her brother?" repeated Lattrey.

"Young Algy. He's coming home from High Coombe to-morrow. He's been in rather hot water at his school, the young ass, and his headmaster's report was rather a corker. I'll speak to Phyllis."

As they came up to the gates of the Priory, Jimmy Silver joined his cousin, somewhat to Lovell's wrath. Lovell was rather fond of Phyllis' company. However, he put up with Lattrey.

"Anything up, Phil, old girl?" Jimmy asked in his candid way.

"Why, no!" said Phyllis, with a smile. "I'm a little tired, that's all."

"Not bothering about your young fathead of a brother?"

Phyllis coloured.

"I—I am rather worried about him, Jimmy," she said in a low voice. "He's been in some trouble at High Coombe. I think he must have got into bad company. He has been punished for—for gambling."

"Phew!"

"He's only reckless," said Phyllis. "He doesn't mean any harm. But—but he was always very self-willed. I'm glad he's coming here for Christmas. If he had gone home with some of his High Coombe friends—" She paused. "He wanted to, but he was not allowed to. But he will be all right here."

"Young ass!" growled Jimmy Silver. "I'll give him a hiding, if you like, Phil, when he comes."

Phyllis laughed.

"I'm afraid that wouldn't do him much good," she said.

Lovell passed them, going towards the house. He was tired of Lattrey's company. Lattrey was following Jimmy and Phyllis.

"Algy's a good little chap enough, Phil," said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully. "He only wants a few more lickings."

"I'm afraid there are some reckless boys at his school, and Algy has picked up his ways from them," said Phyllis. "He was very annoyed at not being allowed to go home for Christmas with some of his friends. But I am glad he's going to be here. He will forget all

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NEXT FRIDAY!

"SAVED FROM THE SEA!"

A SPLENDID STORY OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

that nonsense here; nobody will encourage him in it, you see."

"No fear!" said Jimmy.

The thought of Lattrey came into his mind then, and he started. Lattrey was not exactly the right company for a reckless fag who required leading judiciously back to the right path.

Jimmy glanced round, almost unconsciously, as that uneasy reflection came into his mind.

Lattrey was close behind him, walking very quietly in the snow, his head bent forward.

Jimmy's eyes flashed.

Lattrey started back the next moment, flushing; but Jimmy knew that he had been listening.

Lattrey had heard every word that passed between the two cousins.

It did not matter, certainly, but it was unpleasant. Lattrey was not changed; he was the sneaking eavesdropper of old.

Jimmy made no remark; Lattrey was his guest. But the involuntary expression on his face was enough for Lattrey. The latter walked on quickly to the house, passing the cousins.

Phyllis compressed her lips a little. She had observed the incident, and her opinion of Lattrey was fixed accordingly.

Jimmy Silver was silent and uneasy as he walked on with Phyllis. He had done right in giving Lattrey a chance; he felt that. Christmas was the time for good will and kindness. But—

There was a "but."

Lattrey's company was about the worst conceivable for the reckless fag coming on the morrow from the Devonshire school.

They might be thrown together. If Lattrey desired it, they were certain to be thrown together. Jimmy could not always be watching his guest, that was certain. He revolted at the bare thought of it. And Algy Silver had more money than was good for him. He was much richer than Jimmy. Suppose Lattrey was—

Jimmy drove the thought out of his mind. Lattrey was his guest, and he would not suspect him. Surely the fellow would have the decency to play the game while he was under Jimmy's father's roof.

But there was a cynical smile on Lattrey's thin lips as he went to his room that night.

The scornful gleam in Jimmy's eyes had not escaped him, and it remained in his memory. He flushed as he thought of it.

And Lattrey was growing bored.

There was plenty at the Priory to keep him amused and occupied, if he had been normal in his tastes. But he was not normal. Preparations for Christmas festivities bored him, quietness and calmness bored him, good conduct bored him inexpressibly.

He was beginning to yearn already for the shady associations, the reckless blackguardism that had been his undoing at Rookwood.

"So there's a merry sport coming!" he murmured as he turned in. "A giddy fag who's been licked for going the pace—ha, ha! And Miss Phyllis turned up her nose at me because she thought I was listening! Perhaps dear Miss Phyllis will be sorry for turning up her nose, perhaps I may find some amusement here, after all, before I'm bored to extinction."

He laughed.

Such good as he was capable of had come to the surface that day. In his

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talk with Jimmy on the way home he had been earnest—for the moment. It had vanished now.

The cad of Rookwood was the cad of Rookwood still.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Kindred Spirits!

"COMING along to the station, Lattrey?"

Jimmy Silver asked the question cheerily the next day.

Phyllis had gone out with Mrs. Silver, and Jimmy was to meet his cousin Algy at the railway-station. Lovell was going with him, and he gave Lattrey his choice.

Lattrey nodded at once. He was quite keen to make the acquaintance of the sportive fag from High Coombe.

"Certainly," he said.

The three Rookwood juniors walked down to the station together. Jimmy Silver was quite cheery and cordial to Lattrey. He was determined not to be distrustful.

It was evidently useless to ask Lattrey home with the idea of making the best of him if he was going to distrust him all the time. And Jimmy was of rather a trusting disposition, too.

He was no fool, but his own heart was so frank and loyal that he found it hard to realise that others might be wanting in loyalty.

That Lattrey could accept his hospitality, and insinuate himself into the good graces of the household, and then prove treacherous, was what Jimmy would have described as a "large order." He simply could not and would not think such a thing of anybody.

Lattrey was in high good-humour that morning, and Jimmy and Lovell found him agreeable enough. Even Arthur Edward Lovell was beginning to think that perhaps he had been a little hard on Lattrey at school.

He made up for it now by being quite friendly, and Lattrey met him half-way, so peace and good-humour reigned on all sides.

The juniors arrived at the station before the train came in, and waited on the platform for Master Algy, of High Coombe.

When the train came in Jimmy rushed along to greet a slim, rather handsome lad, who stepped out of a first-class carriage.

Lovell and Lattrey regarded the lad rather curiously.

He was something like Jimmy in features, but his face was much softer in its outlines, perhaps better-looking, and his lower lip had a pouting curl that told of a petulant disposition. The expression on his face was far from contented.

He shook hands with Jimmy Silver in a perfunctory manner, and greeted Lovell and Lattrey, when they were introduced, in quite an off-hand way.

Lovell's reflection was that the Third Form at High Coombe did not get as many lickings as would be good for them. "You might look after my bags and things, Jimmy," said Algy, almost sulkily.

"Right-ho!"

"Had a good journey down?" asked Lovell, as Jimmy moved away.

Algy grunted.

"No; rotten!"

"Pretty cold, I suppose, in the train?"

"Rotten slow train! All the trains are rotten and slow now."

Lovell's eyes gleamed. He moved off to help Jimmy with the baggage, repressing his desire to take Jimmy's cousin by the scruff of the neck and rub his nose on the platform.

Lattrey smiled. What he saw of Master Algy rather confirmed what he had heard about him. He surmised that Algernon Silver was a cheery youth, quite after his own heart.

"Bit dull travelling alone," he remarked. "You must be hungry."

"I'm ready for lunch," grunted Algy.

"You haven't had any lunch?"

Another grunt.

"No."

"You must be famished."

"There ain't any rotten grub cars on the trains now," snorted Algy. "Pah! I had some sandwiches. Bah! All alone, too. Might have gone home with De Vere, only they wouldn't let me. Br-r-r!"

"Pal of yours?" asked Lattrey.

"Yes, rather!" Algy's face brightened a little. "Rippin' chap, De Vere! One of the best. Awfully goey! Some of the fellows said he wasn't goin' to be allowed to come back next term. I know the Head had him on the carpet for a terrific jaw. Rot, I call it! He goes the pace. So do I!"

Algy gave Lattrey a defiant look as he made that remark.

Lattrey smiled genially.

The talk of a Third-Form fag about going the pace gave him a contemptuous amusement; but he was careful not to betray the fact.

"Why shouldn't you?" he said.

"Oh, you think so?" said the fag in surprise. "Ain't you a friend of my cousin Jimmy?"

"Certainly."

"I thought he only chummed with goody-goody little Master Stephens, like himself," observed Algy, regarding Lattrey with new interest. "I shall be horribly bored here. Nothin' doin', you know. Round games!" He sniffed.

"Old Silver—"

"Who?"

"Jimmy's pater, my blessed uncle, he's down on everythin' that makes life worth livin'," said Algy discontentedly. "Why, if he found a playin'-card or a bridge-marker about me he'd pack me off home. Not that I'd mind, only it's frightfully dull at home. I wanted to go home with De Vere—rippin' chap! They wouldn't let me. Lots of things doin' at his place—huntin', bridge, late parties. Regular scorchers there! Just suit me. Br-r-r!"

"Hard lines!"

"I should say so. I shall yawn myself to death here. Round games—playin' for nuts! Good gad!" Master Algy shuddered. "Dancin' with dashed schoolgirls on Boxin' Day! Yaw-aw-aw! An' a sermon if a chap's found smokin'! Pah!"

"Oh, you smoke, do you?"

"You bet! I've got plenty of fags about me, too. I—I say, you won't give me away?" added Algy hastily.

"Of course not! I quite agree with you. We shall get on together," said Lattrey.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Master Algy. "I say, I'm glad I've met you here. What's your name—Lattrey? They'll want me to toot in the Christmas mornin' service. I shall hook it, I can tell you that! I sha'n't be found."

"Lose yourself with me!" grinned Lattrey. "We'll have a smoke somewhere."

"Good man! I say, you're my sort," said Master Algy. "Mum's the word! Here's my high-minded cousin!"

"Come on, kid!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "I've got your sack, and Lovell's got your bag. Trot along!"

The four juniors left the station together to walk to the Priory. Algy soon dropped behind with Lattrey.

NEXT FRIDAY!

"A MUG'S GAME!"

A GRAND TALE OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS.

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By OWEN CONQUEST.

He had found a congenial companion. Lovell glanced back after a time. Algy and Lattrey were chatting at a great rate, and laughing.

"Young Hopeful seems to hit it off with Lattrey," Lovell remarked.

"Yes; doesn't he?"

"Lattrey doesn't seem such a rotter here as he did at Rookwood," remarked Lovell. "We may have been a bit hard on him. That kid seems to take to him, too."

Jimmy nodded. For some reason, perhaps unconsciously, he slowed down for his cousin and Lattrey to rejoin him. Lattrey was speaking, and as he came up his words were audible.

"It's ripping here. There's going to be a skating tournament after Christmas, and I'm doing some practice to enter for it. You'd better do the same."

Jimmy felt a sense of relief. That conversation was certainly harmless enough. He was ashamed of the momentary uneasiness he had felt.

He walked on again with Lovell, and when he was out of hearing Algy made a remark that would have undeceived him if he could have heard it.

"I say, what's-your-name—Lattrey?—you're a deep card! You babbled that rot about skatin' for Jimmy to hear."

Lattrey laughed.

"In these precincts a chap has to be careful," he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better not talk too much before your cousin, either, or say too much about De Vere. You won't get much of a time if you make them suspicious."

"I savvy," said Algy sagely.

"I don't see any harm in seeing life a little myself," said Lattrey, with one eye on the fag. "I'm a bit goey at school, as a matter of fact. I feel in a bandbox here."

"I wouldn't have come, if I could have helped it," grunted Algy. "What on earth did you come for? They couldn't make you."

"My people are away, you see. This is better than sticking it out at school."

Master Algy understood, or thought he did.

"No reason why we shouldn't brighten things up a bit, under the rose," smiled Lattrey. "There's a jolly old tower at the place—fine views from the top—"

"Bother the views!"

"I mean, nobody ever goes up there, and a quiet game wouldn't be interrupted."

"I say, you are a sport," said Algy.

The fag from High Coombe was looking quite cheerful when he arrived at the Priory. He had found a kindred spirit.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Boxing Night!

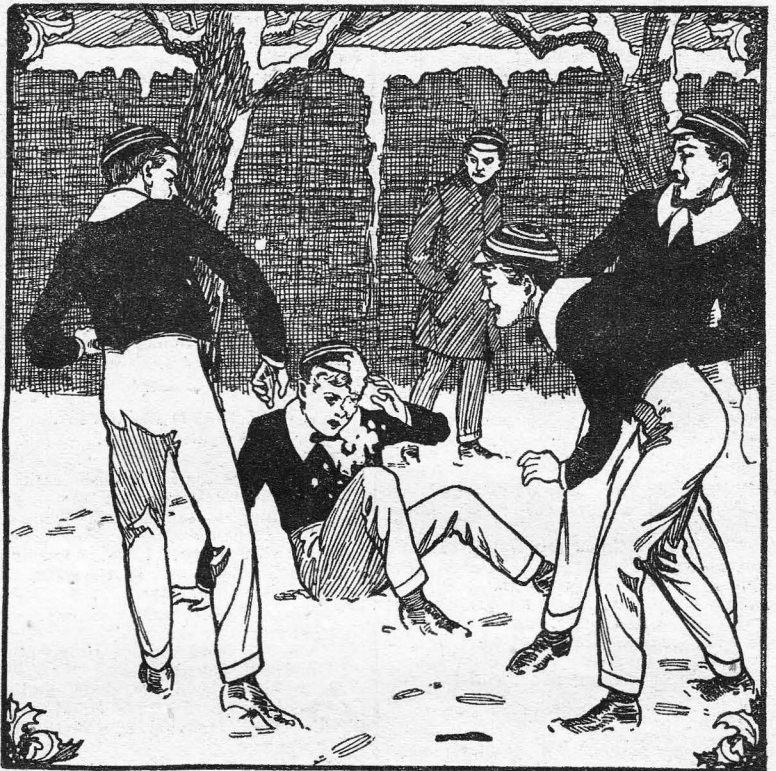
JIMMY SILVER looked for his cousin Algy on Christmas morning when it was time to start for the morning service.

He did not find him. Algy did not "toot" in the service, as he expressed it. Jimmy went with Phyllis and Lovell. Lattrey also had dropped out of sight somewhere. Jimmy did not even know that the two were together.

Lattrey came in early for lunch; Algy came in late. There was no hint that they had been together in the morning.

Christmas morning was naturally a very quiet time—much too quiet for Lattrey and the enterprising fag from High Coombe. Both of them disappeared to a suitable resort a mile away, where a game of billiards could be had.

He was glad enough to have a companion, though it was only a Third Form fag.



Lovell's arm went up, and the snowball flew with deadly aim at Lattrey. Jimmy Silver jumped between. Biff! It was Jimmy who got the snowball, and he sat down on the ground with a resounding bump. There was a roar of laughter from his chums. "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 1.)

Besides, Algy paid for his companionship.

Under the lead of the estimable De Vere of High Coombe, Algy had learned many things not included in the school curriculum. He was a "dab" at banker, at nap, and at bridge. He fancied that he could play billiards, and prided himself on knowing something about "geezes."

The fag had plenty of money, and during those holidays a considerable portion of his money was transferred to Lattrey's pockets. Although he was a "dab" at games of chance and skill, Algy did not seem to have much chance against his new friend.

But he felt that he was "going the pace," as much as was possible in a household like Mr. Silver's.

Certainly, his holiday was much brighter than he had anticipated—brighter, that is, according to his peculiar point of view.

And there was no suspicion. Phyllis glanced at her young brother with a questioning and somewhat troubled expression.

She had feared that he would be morose and discontented, and would try the patience of his uncle and aunt and cousin.

That had not happened; Algy seemed contented enough.

But his contentment was a suspicious circumstance in itself; and Phyllis was fond of her brother, and concerned about him.

She did not like Lattrey. And, though the two were seldom seen together, Phyllis had noted that when one was absent the other was generally absent as well.

There were tell-tale stains of nicotine

on Algy's fingers sometimes, and his temper was sometimes irritable and peevish. He flatly refused to skate, or to join in anything.

On Boxing Day there were high festivities, and a crowd of guests and the young people enjoyed themselves, but Algy went through it all with a sulky face. He was not enjoying himself.

Two or three Rookwood fellows came, and some of Jimmy Silver's friends from St. Jim's; but they were not in the least the kind of fellows Algy liked, and he avoided them.

There was nobody among them like his dear old pal De Vere of High Coombe. Erroll of Rookwood he detested, though he exchanged only a few words with him.

Mornington was there with Erroll, and Algy did not like him, either, though probably he would have liked the dandy of Rookwood well enough in his earlier days.

Mornington eyed Lattrey rather keenly that evening. He had wondered how the cad of Rookwood would get on at Jimmy Silver's home. Apparently he was getting on very well.

Morny was a good hand at dancing, and he was greatly in request that evening.

At a late hour he strolled out on the terrace with Kit Erroll to taste the fresh air after the warmth inside.

"Begad, there's a light in the tower!" ejaculated Mornington, as they came to the end of the terrace.

"That's odd! There can't be anybody there!" said Erroll, in surprise.

"Let's have a look!"

They descended the steps, and crossed

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NEXT FRIDAY!

"SAVED FROM THE SEA!"

A SPLENDID STORY OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS. By FRANK RICHARDS.

through the light snowfall to the old tower of the Priory.

It was somewhat remote from the inhabited part of the house, and a light at that hour was certainly surprising.

As they drew nearer a voice came to their ears from within.

"Your deal, Algy!"

The two juniors stopped dead.

A grim, angry frown came over Erroll's face. Mornington laughed softly.

"I fancy we'd better be gettin' back," he murmured.

Erroll nodded without speaking.

They retraced their steps.

"Dear old Lattrey at the old game again!" smiled Mornington, as they reached the terrace. "What a silly fool Jimmy Silver was to bring him home. I said so at the time."

"It's rotten!" murmured Erroll. "That kid, too—Jimmy's cousin! Jimmy ought to know about this!"

"Can't tell tales about a fellow-guest, dear boy!"

"I suppose not. But it's rotten!"

There was a burst of merry music from within.

"By gad! That's my waltz! Excuse me, old scout!"

And Mornington rushed in.

Erroll was left alone on the terrace, with a troubled brow. It was impossible to speak to Jimmy of what he had accidentally discovered. He could not be the cause of making bad blood between Jimmy and his guest. But he was troubled in mind about it.

There was a light step on the terrace, and Phyllis Silver, with a white shawl about her shoulders, met his eyes. The girl had come out alone.

She gave Erroll a smile.

"Have you seen my brother?" she asked. "You know Algy?"

"Yes, I have seen him, Miss Silver," said Erroll.

"Why, there is a light in the tower!" exclaimed Phyllis.

"Is—is there?"

"Yes. Algy cannot be there, surely?" The girl looked oddly at Erroll, reading the expression on his face. "I—I wish Algy would come in. I think I shall look in the tower."

"There's snow on the ground!" said Erroll hastily.

Phyllis smiled.

"That will not hurt me."

"Miss Silver, I—I shouldn't go to the tower. I think!" muttered Erroll, his face colouring.

He was deeply disquieted at the idea of the girl finding her brother gambling in that secluded corner with Lattrey.

Phyllis gave him a quick look.

"Why not?" she asked quietly.

Erroll hesitated. The light in the tower went suddenly out, and he breathed with relief.

"There! It's out now!"

"But—"

There were footsteps by the terrace.

"Better get back; we shall be missed."

It was Lattrey's low voice from the darkness.

Phyllis drew a deep, hard breath. Without a word she turned and disappeared through the doorway on the terrace.

Erroll followed her in quickly. He had no desire to meet Lattrey.

When Lattrey and Algy came up the steps the terrace was deserted. Algy shivered.

"Jolly cold out here," he said. "Better than that fofoery indoors, though. Old De Vere never dances; he thinks it's rot. So do I. I suppose a chap's got to go in and keep civil?"

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"Necessary to keep up merry appearances," smiled Lattrey. "You go in first. No need to tell 'em we've been out together."

Algy laughed, and went in.

Lattrey followed him ten minutes later, slipping quietly into the crowd indoors, with a smiling face. Lattrey had found some pleasure in Boxing Night, after all, in his own way.

He found Algy Silver, on his first acquaintance, a reckless young scapegrace. He was on the way to turning him into a thorough young blackguard.

That did not weigh on Lattrey's conscience—if he had one.

He was quite cheery now, and he was humming a merry tune when he went to bed. The cad of Rookwood was in high feather.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Phyllis Speaks!

"JIMMY!" It was the following afternoon.

Jimmy Silver was mending a damaged skate, and whistling cheerily over his task, when Phyllis came into the room. Lovell was out on the ice with Erroll and Mornington, who were staying a few days.

"Hallo, Phil!" said Jimmy. "I thought you were skating."

"I want to speak to you, Jimmy!"

"Go ahead, old girl!"

Jimmy laid down the skate, and his face became grave. He could see in Phyllis' pale, troubled face that something was wrong.

"What's up?" he asked quietly.

"Have you seen Algy lately, Jimmy?"

"Not since lunch."

"Or Lattrey?"

"Lattrey! Isn't he skating?"

"No."

"I haven't seen him this afternoon," said Jimmy. "What does it matter?"

"Is Lattrey a real friend of yours, Jimmy?"

"Not exactly," he said. "Why?"

"Can you trust him?"

"I—I—I don't know!" said Jimmy Silver, taken aback. "What on earth's the matter, Phil? Has Lattrey been doing anything?"

Phyllis' look grew more troubled.

"I can't like him," she said. "He hasn't done anything, but there's something—something—I can't trust him. Jimmy, do speak plainly. If Lattrey's a

real friend of yours, I know he must be straight, but—"

"We weren't friends at school," said Jimmy slowly, a troubled look creeping over his own face. "But tell me what's wrong, Phil?"

"I'm anxious about Algy," said the girl, with a tremble in her voice. "Isn't it odd that he should make friends with Lattrey as he has done?"

"I don't know that he has specially."

"He has, and they keep it secret."

"Phil!"

"You haven't noticed, Jimmy, that Algy often goes out by himself, and at the same time Lattrey is never to be seen about the place?"

"I—I hadn't noticed it."

"Last night there was a light in the tower."

"My hat!"

"I—I should have gone there, but your friend Erroll stopped me. He had a reason. He was troubled, and very grave. I—I had missed Algy and Lattrey. Well, then, two persons came back to the terrace, and Lattrey said, 'Better get back; we shall be missed.' A little while afterwards Algy came in, and later, Lattrey, I noticed."

Jimmy Silver's face was very grave now.

"Algy's written home for money," went on Phyllis. "I—I've had a letter from home, asking me whether Algy is showing any of the reckless ways that got him into trouble at school."

"He can't have spent much money here, if any."

"He may have lost it."

Jimmy started.

"Playing cards, do you mean?"

"I—I fear so. Jimmy, was—was Lattrey that kind of boy at Rookwood? If he was, that makes it certain."

Jimmy Silver set his teeth.

"He couldn't be such a cad!" he said.

"How could a fellow be such a vile rotter? I—I think I made a mistake in bringing him here, but—but—"

"Then he was a bad character at your school?" asked Phyllis quietly.

"Well, yes."

"He is not your friend?"

"No."

"You do not even like him?"

"Well, no."

"Jimmy, they are together now, I am certain of it—in the old tower, most likely, as that's where they were last night, and nobody ever goes there." Phyllis clasped her hands. "Jimmy, it's infamous that a child like Algy—he's only a child really—should be led into wickedness by a boy so much older than himself. If they knew at home—"

Phyllis paused, alarmed by the look that came over Jimmy Silver's face. She laid her hand quickly on his arm.

"Jimmy!" she exclaimed breathlessly.

"Oh, I've been a fool—a fool!" muttered Jimmy Silver, white with anger. "Lovell was right. Baby and Newcome were right, and I was a fool!"

"Jimmy!"


"I can see it all now!" said Jimmy, with increasing bitterness. "Lattrey has been fooling me. I don't know that I ought to blame him. I fairly asked for it. But—but who could have thought a fellow could be such a vile rascal—under my father's roof—a guest in the house? Oh, it's too rotten!"

"Why did you ask him here, Jimmy, if you don't like him?"

Jimmy smiled bitterly.

"Because I'm a fool!" he growled. "Because the whole school was down on him, and he deserved it, and—and I was idiot enough to want to give him a chance!"

(Continued on page 16.)



The Best Gift Books for Xmas

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NEXT FRIDAY!

"A MUG'S GAME!"

A GRAND TALE OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS. BY OWEN CONQUEST.



A Magnificent, Long, Complete Story, dealing with the early Adventures of HARRY WHARTON & CO. at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Captain Coker!

"HURRAY!"

"Three cheers for Coker!" "Captain Coker!"

The election at Greyfriars was over. A few days' strenuous work on the part of the two candidates for the honoured post of Captain of Greyfriars had culminated in victory for Coker, of the Fifth Form.

The fellows had the choice of two evils, so to speak. Coker was an ass—not a bad sort of ass, in the fellows' opinions. Loder was a rotter of the worst type, and in choosing between an ass and a rotter Greyfriars had chosen the former.

Loder's first impression was that he had been a fool to anger the juniors by forcing Wingate to fight him in the Close under the very eyes of the Head. Every junior in the school knew that Wingate had been forced to resign the captaincy in consequence—and the juniors were the most enthusiastic voters!

Gerald Loder stamped to and fro in his study, his face pale with rage and chagrin, and envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness running riot in his breast.

He had had his throw of the dice, and he had lost.

He had plotted against George Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, he had brought about a split in the Sixth, he had caused Wingate to become disgraced in the eyes of the doctor, he had driven Wingate from the post of captain!

The prize he had worked for and schemed for had been snatched from his grasp at the last moment, and by an utterly unexpected adversary.

Wingate had fallen from his high estate; and Loder, instead of taking his place, had failed utterly—ridiculously. He had succeeded only in placing a Fifth-Former over himself. Of the two, he would have preferred Wingate as captain. But there would be no getting rid of Coker now. Coker might be all varieties of an ass; but he had great sticking powers. He was captain of Greyfriars now, and, in consequence, captain of the First Eleven, and head of the games. Loder would simply not have a look in in any way. Coker was very much up against the Sixth Form. The Sixth Form disdained Coker; and Coker would repay all that with interest now that the power was in his hands. And the Sixth were pretty certain to "round" on Loder as the cause of all the troubles that would accrue to them until they could get rid of their new captain. In all the Sixth there was only one fellow who approved of Coker's election, and that was Coker minor, the clever youngster who was in the top Form, although younger than his major in the Fifth. But Reggie Coker counted for nothing in the top Form; as a body, the Sixth were against Horace Coker, and so far as they were concerned, the new captain would have a hard row to hoe.

Not that Coker cared. Coker had plenty of good qualities, but modesty and a distrust of his powers could not be counted among them. Coker was perfectly satisfied with himself, and he did not care twopence

whether the Sixth were satisfied with him or not.

Loder's friends dropped into his study one by one to consult him about it. They wanted to know what could be done; but there was nothing to be done. Walker proposed to lick the fags who had voted for Coker, and that proposal was agreed to nem. con. But though that might satisfy their vengeance, it would not unseat the new captain. They had got him now, and they had to stand him, as Phipps remarked.

"You've made a ghastly mess of it, and no mistake, Loder!" said Walker, in his role of Job's comforter.

Loder snarled.

"How was I to foresee this?" he demanded. "Chaps ought to foresee things, when they upset things," said Phipps vaguely.

"Greyfriars won't stand it," said Walker. "Greyfriars will have to stand it," said Carne. "Coker's captain, and he means business!"

"Of course, he'll take the advice of the Sixth in running things," Walker said.

"Of course he won't," growled Carne. "I can see Coker taking advice from anybody—I don't think! The First Eleven are playing Lantham on Saturday; and Coker will have the making up of the team."

"Oh, my hat!"

"His supporters will expect to be played in it," said Loder. "He'll make up a team of the Fifth and Fourth, very likely, and make us look a set of idiots."

"That's what we are, I think," said Walker. "Blest if I don't wish we'd been satisfied with Wingate while we had him!"

"Lot of good saying that now."

"Coker mayn't be such an ass," said Walker, after a pause. "Suppose we see him and point out things to him—"

"And get kicked out of his study."

"Well, the whole position's rotten, and no mistake."

"All Loder's fault!" remarked Walker.

Loder turned on him with a glare.

"How was it my fault?" he bellowed.

"Well, you got Wingate out."

"Wingate resigned!"

"That's all very well; but we all know why he resigned. You planted a fight on him, when you knew that the Head was bound to see it."

"You backed me up in doing it."

"Well, you were leader," said Walker. "I didn't know you were going to lead us into this frightful mess. We shall be grinned to death over this."

"We'd better see Coker, and talk it over with him," said Carne. "If we point out that the Sixth won't stand any nonsense, I dare say he'll see reason. Suppose we tell him that unless he is guided by the advice of a Sixth Form committee, we all refuse to play in the First Eleven under his lead?"

"Well, that might have some effect," said Smith major.

"No blessed good!" growled Loder. "You may as well let him alone."

Carne shook his head.

"As a matter of fact, Loder, old man, I'm not much inclined to follow your advice any more," he said. "You've got us all into a

hole, and we shall have to get out of it the best way we can without you!"

And Carne and the rest left the study, leaving Loder alone.

The prefect made a gesture of rage.

He was quite left out now; his influence over his followers had gone. He had, as they said plainly, made a ghastly mess of things, and put the Sixth into a hole there was no apparent escape from. They did not want any more of his advice after that.

Loder remained a few minutes alone, thinking, with sullen, moody brow. Then he took up a cane, and quitted the study. He made his way to the Second Form-room. Nugent minor, his fag, had voted against him, and it would be some satisfaction to make Dicky Nugent smart for it.

The Second Form-room was in an uproar. The fags had voted for Coker almost to a man, or, rather, to a fag, and they were celebrating their victory. The feed Coker had promised to his supporters was handed out with great liberality. Every fellow was given permission to order what he liked at the school shop—the bill to go to Coker; and the fags had taken full advantage of their new captain's generosity. There was a feast toward in the Second Form-room. Sammy Bunter—Bunter minor—had his fat face wreathed in smiles. Dicky Nugent, and Gatty and Myers, were in their glory, roasting expensive rashers at the Form-room fire. There were jam-tarts, and jam on the desks, and cakes and doughnuts galore, and the popping of corks was incessant. The fags were too busy to see the Form-room door open. Loder strode into the room, and stood looking upon the festive scene with a grim and savage look, his hand closing tighter upon the cane. Dicky Nugent was the first to spot him.

"Ware Loder!" he muttered; and the festive fags stood upon the defensive at once.

Loder strode towards Dicky Nugent. Dicky promptly placed a desk between himself and his fag-master.

"Come here, you young cad!" said Loder, between his teeth.

"What for?" asked Dicky cautiously.

"I'm going to lick you!" roared Loder.

"Tain't in the game to lick a chap for voting against you," said Dicky defiantly.

"Coker won't allow it."

Loder smiled grimly.

"I'm not going to lick you for voting against me, but for not cleaning the crockery in my study!" he said.

"What a whopper!" said Dicky. He made a sign to Gatty, who scuttled out of the Form-room. "Look here, Loder," went on Nugent minor, "if you bully me, I shall appeal to Coker. Coker has promised that there's going to be no more bullying."

"Will you come here?" roared Loder.

"No fear!"

"I—I—I'll—"

"You can let me alone," said Dicky. "I'll ask Coker not to let me fag for you any more, either. He can work it, as captain of Greyfriars. You let me alone!"

Loder made a rush at the fag. Dicky dodged among the desks, and Loder pursued

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NEXT FRIDAY!

"SAVED FROM THE SEA!"

A SPLENDID STORY OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY!

A GRAND FOUR-PAGE SUPPLEMENT

Edited by

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER of Greyfriars School.

Assisted by

HIS FOUR FAT SUBS—SAMMY BUNTER of Greyfriars, FATTY WYNN and BAGGY TRIMBLE of St. Jim's, and TUBBY MUFFIN of Rookwood.

Contributions from the Three Famous Schools.

CHRISTMAS CARDS!

By SAMMY BUNTER.

Christmas is not a time to air greivances. But there is one greivance, dear readers, that I really must let off steam about.

I refer to the pernicious practtiss of sending Christmas cards.

Now, I have no doubt that in the days of our four-fathers it was considered right and proper to send people Christmas cards when the festive season came round. But the custom ought to have died a violent death long ago. I don't suppose you will agree with me, but that is my opinion.

Up to the time of writing, I have received twenty Christmas cards from various friends and relations. What on earth is the use of them—the cards, I mean—not the friends and relations?

You can't eat Christmas cards! The only thing you can do with them is to stick them in an album, and what's the use of that?

Now, if those twenty Christmas cards which I have received were twenty tuck-hampers—

That would be something like!

A tuck-hamper, packed with good things, conveys the true spirit of Christmas.

Some say otherwise. Some declare that a dainty Christmas card, with the usual picture of a snow-covered cottage and a man tramping down a lane, is the ideal gift for Christmas. But ask your boy friends which they would rather have—a Christmas card or a tuck hamper—and ninety-nine out of a hundred will vote with both hands for the tuck-hamper! Call it gluttony if you will. I prefer to call it yewman nature!

The man who invented Christmas cards ought to have his effigy burnt every time the Fifth of November comes round.

How nice it would be if one's maiden aunt were to send a note of this sort every Christmas:

"My dear nevvew,—I am not buying any Christmas cards this year. I enclose instead a five-pound note, which please spend to the best advantage."

Life would be worth living then.

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By BILLY BUNTER.

My dear Readers.—We now set before you, on a dainty dish, with plenty of nice seasoning, the first Christmas Number, in supplement form, of our "Weekly."

When you have read this number from cover to cover, from Page 1 to Page 4—not a very long stretch, is it?—I can imagine you getting up on your hind-legs and shouting, "Three cheers for good old Billy Bunter! His Christmas Number is the greatest thing that ever happened! How he and his four fat subs must have worked! What gallons of midnight oil they must have consumed! So once again, three cheers for good old Billy Bunter, and let the merry roof fall in!"

I am as proud as a peacock, dear readers in connection with this Christmas Number of ours. It is absolutely "de lucks," as the French say. It is as full rich cream by comparison with the weak milk that Harry Wharton served up last week in the Christmas Number of his feeble production the "Greyfriars Herald." If I couldn't edit a paper better than Wharton, I should lay down my pen in disgust, and take up a fresh hobby.

When this number is in your hands the atmosphere will be vibrating with the spirit of Christmas.

Christmas is the one season of the year when a fellow can gorge to his heart's content. He sometimes has to pay a heavy price for his gluttony by spending Boxing Day in bed. But why worry about to-morrow if to-day be sweet?

Personally, I mean to have a top-hole time this Christmas, and I want every one of my readers to do the same. I have done my "whack" in contributing to their happiness by bringing out a Christmas Number which can only be described as "par eggs-along." (Didn't know I was such a brilliant French scholar, did you?)

A Very Merry Christmas to you all! I am too full of emotion—and jam-tarts—to say more.

Your Editor.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS!

A special Yuletide message from Billy Bunter and His Four Fat Subs.

BILLY BUNTER:

Readers all, in every clime,
May you have a topping time!

SAMMY BUNTER:

Now that Christmastide is here
And the snow and ice appear. (Perhaps!)

FATTY WYNN:

May your Christmas gifts be numerous
(Christmas presents always humour us.)

BAGGY TRIMBLE:

May you have good feeds galore,
And, smiling, still come up for more!

TUBBY MUFFIN:

May no sweet, delightful snack
Cause a bilious attack!

BILLY BUNTER:

May you eat and drink your fill,
And not (as Muffin says) get ill!

SAMMY BUNTER:

May you be kissed by Uncle Joe
Beneath the festive mistletoe!

FATTY WYNN:

I'd rather Uncle Joseph kissed me,
And maiden aunts (and others) missed me!

BAGGY TRIMBLE:

I'd rather not be kissed at all,
Grinned at by dozens in the hall!

TUBBY MUFFIN:

In any case, our reader chums
Can brave misfortune when it comes!

BILLY BUNTER:

Once more, then, readers all, we wish
you
In this, our Special Christmas issue—

ALL:

A joyous feast of Christmas cheer,
And a successful, bright New Year!



The Autobiography of a Plum Pudding

PUDDINGS are made, not born. I was made at Rookwood on December 15th, in the year of grace one thousand nine hundred and twenty-one.

It was in the kitchen at Rookwood School that I first saw the light of day, and everyone remarked what a fine-looking fellow I was. I was as large as a football, and would have done credit to a duke's dining-table.

When I was first produced, and placed on the table, the members of the kitchen staff eyed me with envy.

"Who is it for, cook?" one of the serving-maids asked.

"Why, for the 'Ead's wife, of course! Mrs. Chisholm specially asked me to make it."

"It's a grand pudding!"

"Quite the best I have ever made!" said the cook, with an air of pride. "The 'Ead's guests will enjoy this pudding on Christmas Day, I feel sure!"

At the cook's words I trembled involuntarily.

My death-sentence had been pronounced. I had only ten days in which to live.

On December 25th I should be carried in state to the Head's dining-room, there to be dissected and devoured.

It was a haunting prospect. Why should puddings be cut off, as it were, in the prime of life?

The Christmas turkeys have a much better time than we do. They, at any rate, have many months in which to flourish and wax fat. But the poor old plum-pudding has only a few days to live—and those days are usually spent in a cold larder or a dark cupboard.

"Are you going to put any threepenny-pieces in it, cook?" inquired another of the serving-maids.

The cook smiled.

"They are already in," she said—"twenty of them."

The maid sighed.

"I only wish that pudding belonged to me!" she said. "After I had cut it up, and extracted all the threepenny-pieces, I should be able to buy a new hat!"

I felt devoutly thankful that I did not fall into the hands of the callous serving-maid!

"Where are you going to put it, cook?" was the next question that greeted my ears. (Puddings don't really have ears, but this is a figure of speech.)

"In the cupboard," said cook.

"Will it be safe there?"

"Of course!"

The cook lifted me very gently, and bore me away to the cupboard.

I was deposited on a large dish, and I had a shelf to myself. Such common things as bacon, sausages, and so forth, were not allowed to associate with me.

Before shutting me in the cupboard, the cook stuck a sprig of holly into me. The pain was so intense that I could have cried aloud. Nobody would ever credit what a plum-pudding has to go through before it is finally demolished.

The cupboard door closed upon me, and I was left alone with my thoughts. Needless to state, they were not pleasant ones.

For ten long days and nights I was to lie in a state of suspense, and then would come the end of my career.

I had nothing to cheer me up during that interval of waiting—nothing to nerve me for the ordeal.

On the shelf below me were two fat jellies, which were destined to share a similar fate. They were trembling violently.

Two days and nights of captivity passed slowly by, and on the third night there were dramatic developments.

It was nearly midnight when sounds of stealthy footsteps became audible.

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The footsteps were approaching the kitchen. They halted at length outside my prison.

My heart beat faster than usual. (It never beats at all, as a matter of fact, but this is another figure of speech.)

What was going to happen?

Was I to be rescued from my sorry plight, or was I to go to a premature doom?

The cupboard door was stealthily opened. The two jellies trembled more violently than ever.

But they need not have feared. The human hand which groped its way inside the cupboard did not proceed in their direction; it proceeded in mine. It felt me all over very affectionately, and then I was hauled down from the shelf.

"My hat! What a ripping plum-pudding!" exclaimed a voice.

I groaned at the sound of that voice. For was it not the voice of Tubby Muffin, Rookwood's champion gormandiser?

Surely this spelt my doom? How could I hope to remain in one piece with Tubby Muffin in the vicinity?

My worst fears were realised.

Producing a knife from the table drawer, my captor proceeded to hack a large lump off my anatomy.

Oh, the agony I suffered! Why is there not a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Plum Puddings?

I should have come to an untimely end that night but for the unexpected arrival,



Tubby Muffin had his teeth fastened into me when Bulkeley came on the scene.

in dressing-gown and slippers of Bulkeley of the Sixth.

Tubby Muffin had his teeth fastened into me when Bulkeley came on the scene. He ceased to munch, and a murmur of dismay escaped his lips.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Caught in the act!" said the captain of Rookwood sternly. "What are you doing with that plum-pudding?"

"Ahem! I—I was just admiring it, Bulkeley!"

"You've a queer way of showing your admiration!" said Bulkeley grimly. "Put the pudding—or what's left of it—back in the cupboard, and report to me in my study after breakfast to-morrow morning!"

Badly mutilated, I was restored to the cupboard, and then I heard the sound of retreating footsteps.

I was left alone in the darkness to nurse, my injuries, and to look forward with trepidation to the time when I should be carried into the Head's dining-room on a tray.

Alas! I shall not be the only plum-pudding to be sacrificed on Christmas Day. Thousands of my brothers up and down the country will be served up steaming hot.

I tell you, it's not all sugar and spice being a Christmas plum-pudding!

CHRISTMAS CHEER!

By FATTY WYNN.



Merry Christmas, readers all! And many, many more of 'em!

It is not fitting (as Baggy Trimble said when he tried on Gussy's fancy waistcoat) that I should start grumbling and grousing at this festive season. And yet—I really can't help saying that there is something wrong about the way we spend our Christmas.

To my mind, the basis and the very foundation stone of a really Merry Christmas is the Christmas dinner.

Of late years the dinner has been looked upon as a secondary affair, and other delights have been given the preference.

This is all wrong.

A snow fight, a keen game of footer, a skating expedition—all are excellent things. But neither one at a time or all together are they nearly as important as the Christmas dinner.

In the good old days Christmas was a time for feasting and revelry, and very little else. The Ancient Britons would kill the fatted calf, and fight tooth and nail for its possession. When the meal was over they would promptly kill something else—the fatted sheep or the fatted pig. And they would continue to feast in right merry style until Christmas was over.

I sometimes wish I had lived in those days, when it was not considered greedy for a fellow to polish off a sirloin of beef, or a shoulder of mutton, off his own bat. I don't know whether they made doughnuts and jam-tarts in those days, or even mince-pies and plum-puddings, but if they did, you can bet the Ancient Briton did full justice to them. He would spend Christmas Day, and, probably, the whole of Boxing Day, in a quaint old cave bearing the following sign: "Ye Tucke Shoppe." And he would not budge until the pangs of a bilious attack compelled him to do so.

Nowadays, it is very different.

Football, skating, snow-fighting, visits to the pantomime—all these things take precedence. The Christmas dinner, instead of being the primary consideration, is often regarded as the least important item on the Yuletide programme.

Let us get back to the old style, and feast to our heart's content. Let us cook the fatted turkey and slice the festive plum-pudding! Let us masticate the mince-pies, and tackle the iced-cake with a will!

Figgus and Kerr declare that this is sheer gluttony on my part. It is a natural, healthy desire to make Christmas what it ought to be—a time of feasting and jollification.

Here's to the good old Christmas dinner! And here's to a Merry Yuletide, readers all, with heaps of good cheer, and everything that goes to make life worth living.

Think of me on Christmas Day, when the dinner-gong is booming through your ancestral halls! I only wish I could pay a visit to all your homes, and sample a piece of plum-pudding at each!

I shall bob up again in next week's issue—always provided I am not too ill through excessive feeding. It is quite possible, though, that this Christmas will find me the worse for food!



(EDITOR'S NOTE.—This story is pure fancy, dear readers. The incidents it describes never happened at all. Micky Desmond is Irish, and you know what Irish imagination is if it's allowed to run riot!)

T WAS Christmas Eve. The moon shone brightly on Bunter Court—the seat of the Bunter family for countless generations.

In the wonderful old-fashioned dining-room, where that valiant trencherman, Sir Obese Bunter, had once been known to demolish six sirloins of beef at one sitting, were Billy and Sammy, the famous firm of Bunter Brothers.

Outside the wind howled mournfully, and the snow fell in sheets. But in Bunter Court all was merry and bright. The log-fire was blazing cheerfully in the dining-room, and Billy and Sammy, judging by the roseate hue of their cheeks, looked as if they were trying to roast themselves.

"Going to hang your stocking up to-night, Billy?" inquired Sammy.

Billy shook his head.

"I hung it at Greyfriars on the last night of the term," he said, "and Santa Claus—as I thought—filled it for me in the night. But I afterwards discovered that 'Santa Claus' was Mark Linley."

"So you don't believe in Santa Claus, Billy?"

"Not now. I used to. Anyway, Santa Claus isn't likely to visit Bunter Court."

"He came last Christmas Eve," said Sammy.

"Yes, and what did he bring you? You woke up in the morning, if I remember rightly, and found a penn'orth of peardrops in your stocking!"

Sammy frowned at the recollection.

"Pr'aps I shall get better luck this year," he said. "Hope so, anyway."

"You're going to hang your stocking up, Sammy?"

"Of course!"

Billy Bunter's little round eyes twinkled with mischief.

A brilliant inspiration came to him.

"Why not dress up as Santa Claus and pay Sammy a visit?"

There was a Santa Claus cloak in the lumber-room which would answer the purpose splendidly.

Billy and Sammy had separate bed-rooms. It would be quite an easy matter, Billy reflected, to climb on to the roof, lower himself down one of the chimneys, and emerge, sooty but triumphant, into the fireplace in Sammy's room. The noise of his descent would awaken Sammy, who would imagine that the genuine Santa Claus had arrived. Billy would then solemnly advance to the foot of his minor's bed and drop a brick into Sammy's stocking.

"What are you grinning about, Billy?"

Sammy's voice interrupted Bunter major's train of thought.

"Eh? Was I grinning?"

"Like a Cheshire cat! What's the joke?" "I—I was smiling at the thought of the Christmas dinner," explained Billy.

"Yes, it'll be a first-rate spread, and no mistake," said Sammy. Then he rose and stretched himself. "I'll be getting to bed now, I think."

Sammy retired to his bed-room. As for Billy, he went in search of the red cloak and white whiskers of Santa Claus. Having obtained them from the lumber-room, he sang out "Good-night!" to his father, who was at work in his study, and then conveyed the disguise to his own room. He would not need to use it until midnight.

Sammy Bunter, who believed in Santa Claus with all the innocent faith of youth, procured a large and spacious stocking, and hung it over the bed-rail.

"I'm sure Santa Claus will arrive in the night and fill it," he murmured.

He undressed, and got into bed. But he did not sleep. He was immensely excited.

The hours passed slowly.

Sammy lay in bed in a state of wakefulness, with a candle burning close at hand.

It was typical Christmas weather without. The sleet dashed against the window-panes. The moon, which an hour before had been shining brightly, was now obscured behind a bank of sullen snow-clouds.

Boom!

The grandfather clock in the drawing-room downstairs started to strike the midnight hour.

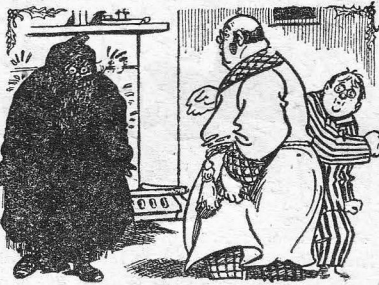
Billy Bunter, in the next room to Sammy, started to put his scheme into execution. He got out of bed, and donned the Santa Claus cloak, hood, and whiskers.

He surveyed himself in the mirror, and chuckled.

"I look the part. There's no doubt about that!" he murmured. "And now I've got to get on to the beastly roof!"

This was not so difficult as it might appear. There was a trap-door giving access to the roof.

Billy Bunter ascended the short ladder, pushed open the trap-door, and the next moment he was exposed to the wintry elements. The wind whistled about his ears, the sleet beat into his face.



Mr. Bunter started back as Billy crawled out from the fireplace. His appearance was extraordinary.

And now came the most tricky manoeuvre of all—that of descending the chimney into Sammy's bed-room.

Billy Bunter was no acrobat. He knew very little about chimneys and how to accomplish their descent. But he knew that this particular chimney was only a short one, and that there was little danger.

He cocked one leg over the aperture, and then the other. Then he commenced the descent.

There were iron hooks projecting all the way down, and Billy Bunter was able to obtain a hold both for his feet and his hands.

He got half-way down the chimney without mishap. The operation was delightfully simple. In fact, a chimney-sweep could not have made better progress.

But, alas! Billy Bunter had overlooked the fact that the chimneys at Bunter Court were peculiarly constructed, inasmuch as they were wide at the top and bottom, but narrow in the middle.

When Billy Bunter got half-way, therefore, he was stuck—tightly wedged in a cavity of soot.

A slimmer fellow than Billy Bunter would have had no difficulty in squeezing his way through. But Billy, by reason of his bulk,

was unable either to reascend or to descend. He was a fixture.

The air he breathed was not of the purest. His immediate surroundings were black as pitch.

A feeling of terror seized him. He raised a yell.

"Help! Help!"

The cry did not pass unheard. Sammy Bunter heard it. Sammy had been lying in a wide-awake condition, awaiting the arrival of Santa Claus. He was scared almost out of his wits on hearing that muffled cry.

"Help!"

Billy Bunter, wedged in the chimney, repeated his call for assistance.

To Sammy it seemed like the muffled wailing of a spirit. He was thoroughly frightened.

His candle had gone out, but he relit it, half expecting to find a ghostly figure confronting him. He blinked around with startled eyes, but could see nothing.

And then another yell, more terrifying than its predecessors, became audible.

Sammy could endure it no longer. He scrambled out of bed, and hurried to the room in which his father slept.

"Pater! Wake up—quick!"

Sammy emphasised the words by shaking his esteemed parent violently by the shoulders.

Mr. Bunter started out of his sleep.

"Samuel! What is the meaning of this?" "There's a ghost!" exclaimed Sammy, shivering in his pyjamas.

"Nonsense, boy!"

"But there is, pater! It's somewhere near my room. I can hear it wailing!"

Something in Sammy's tone convinced Mr. Bunter that this was no nightmare. He got out of bed, donned his dressing-gown, and led the way to Sammy's apartment.

As father and son entered a muffled yell greeted their ears.

Mr. Bunter turned pale.

"It would seem that this house is haunted!" he muttered. "I remember to have heard of a ghost in connection with it at the time I assumed the tenancy! Hark! There is that dreadful sound again! I am quite at a loss how to act."

No sooner had Mr. Bunter finished speaking than an avalanche of soot shot down into the fire-grate.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the agitated parent. "There is somebody up the chimney!"

The deluge of soot was followed by another. Then came a pair of plump legs, quickly followed by a human body.

Billy Bunter had at last succeeded in squeezing his way through.

His appearance as he crawled out from the fireplace was extraordinary. His face, his clothes, his whiskers, were smothered with soot. It was some time before his father and brother recognised him.

"William!" gasped Mr. Bunter. "What—what does this mean?"

"Ow!"

"I can only assume that you have undertaken the descent of the chimney for a boyish prank! I do not like these sort of pranks, William. They are trying to the nerves. I had intended giving you a substantial Christmas present, but in the circumstances I shall be less generous than I had intended. You present a disgraceful spectacle! I advise you to plunge into a hot bath forthwith."

Billy Bunter did not relish hot baths, as a rule. But on this occasion he crawled limply away, and followed the advice of Bunter senior!

MY CHRISTMAS LETTER!

By TUBBY MUFFIN.

My dear Readers,—Thank goodness I haven't shared the fate of poor old Baggy Trimble of St. Jim's, who has been crowded out of the Christmas Number!

Baggy tells me that he wrote a perfectly priceless column article, entitled, "Bilious Attacks: Their Cause and Cure." It would have been very topical, but at the last minute Billy Bunter rejected it in favour of an article by Fatty Wynn. Baggy declares that he won't write for the "Weekly" any more, but you can bet your boots he'll bob up again in next week's issue.

So Christmas is here at last, and the world is fairly humming with joy. I always think that Christmas is in every way the grandest festival of the year. Easter isn't bad, but they only give you Easter eggs to eat. Whereas at Christmas all manner of good things grace the festive board.

Turkey, ham, plum-puddings, mince-pies, Christmas-cake, nuts, fruit, and other delicacies are served up, and it makes one feel good to be alive.

Myself, I am no glutton. I only partake sparingly of all the above-named delicacies. But I like to see other people enjoying themselves. That is the true spirit of Christmas—to sit and nibble a banana while your friends are pitching into the fattened turkey! Let them be gluttons just for one day in the year. It won't do them any harm.

Up to the time of writing, I have received half a dozen tuck-hampers from various friends and relations. But I shall give them all away—the tuck-hampers, I mean, not the friends and relations!

If I were a greedy sort of fellow, I should smuggle all the hampers into the vaults, and then proceed to make a beast of myself. But I am far too refined to think of doing that!

Well, dear readers, I hope you will all enjoy your Christmas revels up to the hilt. Eat, drink, and be merry, and have the time of your lives! Bless you, I was young myself once!

I hope you will have heaps of fun and frolic, and that "Billy Bunter's Weekly" will not be the least of your pleasures.

Of course, this Christmas Number would be hopelessly dull if it wasn't for this delightful letter of mine.

I would like to pay a visit in person to all your homes—at least, to all the homes where the doorways are wide enough to admit me! But I must deny myself this pleasure.

Think of me when you are tackling the festive turkey, and filling your inner selves with rich plum-pudding. Think of me when you kiss, or are being kissed, under the mistletoe. Think of me, when you pay a visit to the pantomime, and watch the antics of the demon!

Well, dear readers, I can see the post-man staggering across the quad with another hamper for me, so I must quit. I will drink your health on Christmas Day in ginger-wine. And I wish you all, from my heart, a right Merry Christmas!

Your plump and genial friend,
REGINALD MUFFIN.

THE POPULAR.—No. 153.



By Monty Louther.

THE fire burned brightly in the dining-room at Eastwood House.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the scion of a noble family, reclined before it, with his elegant limbs in an attitude of repose.

From the snow-covered lawn came the more or less tuneful voices of the carol-singers.

Presently one voice alone—a deep, bass one—thundered out the words:

"Hither, page, and stand by me,
If thou know'st it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where, and what his dwelling?"

Then, after a brief interval, came the response, in a squeaky treble:

"Sire, he lives a good league hence,
Underneath the mountain—
Close beside the forest fence,
By St. Agnes Fountain."

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "I should think anybody would want to live a good league hence with that awful noise goin' on! Poor beggahs!" he added sympathetically, referring to the carol-singers. "I suppose they imagine that they can sing. Pity to disillusion them! Still—"

Arthur Augustus rose to his feet, and went out into the hall. Here, he donned his overcoat with a specially-selected cap. Then he ventured forth into the snow.

The carol-singers had stopped through sheer lack of breath.

Faintly through the gloom, Arthur Augustus



The bulldog rushed on to the lawn, and the carol-singers took to their heels.

could distinguish their figures. There were six of them—all men. Judging by their attire, they appeared to be of the farm-labouring fraternity.

One of the men, on catching sight of Arthur Augustus, shuffled towards him, extending a cap in his hand. He had an all-contributions-thankfully-received expression on his face.

Ever generous, Arthur Augustus produced a couple of half-crowns, and dropped them into the cap.

"One's fwm me, an' one's fwm my patah," he explained. "I don't want my patah to be disturbed now. He's havin' a nap in his studey."

"Thank 'ee kindly, sir!" said the rustic, touching his forelock. "Shall we give 'ee another carol before we go? There's one about a merry gentleman resting!"

"No, no!" said Arthur Augustus hurriedly. "I think you had better pass on to another house, dear boy. If you like, I will come with you."

The rustic looked astonished. "I'm wathah a good singah, you see!" explained Gussy modestly. "I shall give a tone to the pwoceedin's. Whose house are you goin' to next?"

"Major Martinet's, sir."

"Bai Jove! The majah is a bit of a tartar, isn't he?"

"That 'e be, sir. Still, we be hopin' to get a bob or two out of 'im, as ever was." "Well, if I wendah assistance, the majah is bound to be fwightfully bucked!" said Arthur Augustus. "A vevy good judge of singin' once told me that he had nevah heard

a voice quite like mine befoah. Come along, deah boys! It's a good mile to the majah's house!"

The little party set off through the snow. Two of the men carried a portable harmonium. It had been manufactured in Germany in the Middle Ages. It produced an abundance of sound, but very little melody. Even a Paderewski could not have coaxed sweet strains from that harmonium.

Major Martinet's house stood in its own grounds.

The major, his military career over, had gone into retirement. And he did not like his retirement to be disturbed. He was a peppery old gentleman, and he was no friend of Lord Eastwood.

The old war-dog was dozing in front of a blazing fire when he was rudely awakened by the strains of the carol-singers.

The rustics had dumped their harmonium down on the major's chrysanthemum bed. One of the yokels stood in front of it, thumping the keys vigorously. And as he did so, the others rendered a carol, commencing:

"It was a wild December night!"

The December night wasn't the only thing that was wild.

Major Martinet sprang to his feet. His eyes were gleaming with wrath.

The major was a man who, to quote Shakespeare, had no music in his soul. He was not moved by concord of sweet sounds. That is to say, he was not moved by emotion, but by anger.

"Begad!" he thundered. "Who dares to come here and kick up such a shindy at this time of night? Who dares to disturb my peace?"

The major rang a bell, and a burly serving man appeared.

"What is that thundering row going on outside my house, James?"

"Carol-singers, sir!"

"Carol-singers, hey? Well, throw 'em out, James—throw 'em out! Every man jack of 'em! D'ye hear?"

James bowed, and withdrew. He stepped out on to the lawn, and launched a frontal attack upon the astonished carol-singers. The latter had expected peace, not kicks. And they had the surprise of their lives when the serving man waded in amongst them, hitting out with his fists.

Arthur Augustus had the misfortune to stop one of the blows with his nose.

"Yawoooooh!" he yelled. "You feahful wottah! I will administah a severe thwashin'—"

But the serving man was already getting the worst of the argument. One cannot attack half a dozen burly yokels and expect to emerge from the conflict unscathed.

James staggered back under an avalanche of blows, and he was finally obliged to beat a retreat into the house.

It was a very ruffled and dishevelled manservant who presented himself before the major.

"Begad, James!" exclaimed that worthy. "What have you been doin' to yourself, hey?"

"They're too many for me, sir!" muttered James.

"Then we'll set the dog on 'em, by George! Hi, Cæsar! Good lad! See 'em off!"

An aggressive-looking bulldog promptly obeyed his master's commands. He rushed out on to the lawn, barking fiercely. And the carol-singers dispersed, leaving the harmonium behind them in their hot haste.

Arthur Augustus was the last to leave. And he did not leave intact, for the bulldog helped himself to a goodly portion of Gussy's trousers.

Half an hour later a breathless and bedraggled figure came into the drawing-room at Eastwood House.

Lady Eastwood greeted Arthur Augustus in astonishment.

"Arthur! What does this mean?"

"It means," groaned Arthur Augustus, sinking down limply on to the couch, "that I've been cawol-singin'!"

Then, with unusual emphasis, Gussy added: "Nevah again!"

Coker's Short Reign!

(Continued from page 8.)

read it with equal interest. As a rule, First Eleven matches did not interest the juniors so much as their own fixtures; but this was an exception. Of the crowd that read the notice—at least fifty considered that they should, by rights, have been in the team. If a Fifth-Former could be captain of the First Eleven, a Fourth-Former or a Removee could play in it—why not? Horace Coker did not look at it in that light, however; and it must be admitted that his most enthusiastic backers at the election had already begun to put on sackcloth and ashes.

The list was complete, and it contained names of Fifth-Formers, and no others. It read:

Greene; Fitzgerald, Browne; Tate, Lane, Bland; Sutton, Potter, Coker, Thompson, Pride—all fellows in the Fifth Form of Greyfriars.

The juniors grunted as they read it; the Sixth-Formers sneered.

It was known that Wingate and North had declined to play, and that no other members of the Sixth had been given a chance. Blundell had also refused to play under Coker.

"Well, I think that's a rotten list!" Temple of the Fourth observed. "In all that lot there ain't more than four players—and Coker isn't one of them."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Nice prospect for Greyfriars!" grunted Hobson of the Shell. "Not even a couple of Shell chaps to give the team a backbone!"

"More likely to give the team the pip!" said Bob Cherry. "What was wanted was six or seven of the Remove—"

"Oh, rot!"

"Might have put in a few of the Fourth!" growled Temple. "What the dooce did we elect Coker for? That's what I want to know!"

Bob Cherry chuckled. "That's what we all want to know, I think," he remarked.

"It's not a First Eleven—it's a Form team," said Harry Wharton; "and it isn't up to the usual Fifth Form team, either, because Coker's in it."

"Somebody ought to remonstrate with Coker," said Nugent.

"Lot of good that would do. There never was such an ass—"

"Such a chump—"

"Such a duffer—"

"Such a fathead!"

"And that's the blithering idiot you've elected to be skipper of Greyfriars!" said Vernon-Smith unpleasantly. "Don't you think Loder would have been a bit better than that—eh?"

"No," said Wharton. "Coker's a duffer, but Loder's a rotter, and that's worse. Coker for my money, if we must have one of them."

"We shall look a precious set of idiots on Saturday when the Lantham lot walk over our First Eleven!" sneered the Bouncer.

"Faith, and that's thrue for ye!" said Micky Desmond. "It wouldn't be so bad if Coker let Blundell captain the team. But he won't!"

"No fear!"

"That wouldn't be Coker!"

Blundell of the Fifth was thinking about that, too. And he rushed away to Loder's study. He found the prefect looking very glum. Loder was alone, and not cheerful. Other fellows besides Blundell had thought it their duty to say things to him. His closest friends had turned upon him now that they fully realised what a ghastly mess he had brought them into. Whatever faults they had to find with Wingate, they would have given whole terms of pocket-money to see him captain of Greyfriars again. The Sixth ignored and neglected. Rebellious fags checking the seniors unchecked. The Sixth left out of the first eleven, and seeing Greyfriars hopelessly licked, with the prospect of seeing the licking repeated at every match for the rest of the season. It was indeed a long and heavy indictment against Loder! The fellows were exasperated with Coker; but then Coker was an ass, and could only be expected to be asinine. Loder ought to have known better. Why couldn't he let

well alone? The veriest "rotter" in the Sixth had some feeling for the reputation of the school on the footer field; and that reputation would be in rags and tatters now. Greyfriars would be a standing joke among all the elevens they played—and it was all Loder's fault. Even Carne and Walker, who had backed Loder up all along the line, agreed that it was his fault. Loder, in fact, had just had a very unpleasant interview with them, in which high words had been exchanged on both sides; and he was still feeling sore and savage when Blundell of the Fifth burst into the study.

"You ass!" roared Blundell, by way of opening.

Loder glared at him.

"What's the matter now?" he demanded.

"Have you gone off your silly rocker?"

Coker insists upon captaining the eleven, and I've resigned!" roared Blundell. "He's going to play the biggest idiot he can find in the Fifth, in my place."

"Well, I can't help it," growled Loder.

"It was all your fault."

"Oh, shut up! I've had that from Carne, and Walker, and Phipps, and the whole dashed family!" said Loder.

"Serve you right. You ought to be scragged," said Blundell. "Why couldn't you let Wingate alone? He was a good captain enough, though he had his faults. You put us up to grousing because he didn't play enough of the Fifth in the first eleven—"

"You've got enough of the Fifth in it now," said Loder, with a sour smile.

"Yes; and the Fifth are going to be made ridiculous, and the whole school ridiculous, by that idiot Coker—and it's all your fault! I'd rather see a first eleven playing without a single Fifth-Former in it!"

"Well, it's no good jawing me—"

"We'll do something more than jaw you, you fathead!" howled Blundell. "If we cut up a rotten show on Saturday—and we shall—we'll scrag you. I'll get all the Fifth and the Sixth to unite to put you through it, you ass! You'll be tarred and feathered by the seniors—so look out!"

And Blundell stamped out of the study, and slammed the door behind him.

Loder gave a sort of groan.

Never had an unhappy plotter been so overwhelmed by the results of his plotting. Instead of becoming captain of the school, he had become the most unpopular fellow in Greyfriars; and if the election had been held over again, he would certainly not have polled a single vote, if his opponent had been a fag in the Third Form. Loder was not given to repenting of his bad actions, but he repented now. The trouble was that there seemed to be no way of undoing the mischief he had done. And Blundell meant what he said. If not actually tarred and feathered, Loder was certain to be ragged by the seniors after Lantham had walked over the Greyfriars First.

Loder thought it out, and took a desperate resolution. He made his way to the Head's study, and found Dr. Locke alone. The doctor glanced in some surprise at the prefect's worried face.

"Is anything the matter, Loder?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said Loder. "I—I want to speak to you about the—the captaincy, sir. You know that Coker of the Fifth has been elected captain of the school. He's messing everything up, and—and—"

The Head's face hardened.

"I have already told you, Loder, that I cannot interfere in that matter," he said. "The boys made their own choice, and must abide by it."

"I—I think I ought to tell you something, sir," said Loder desperately. "You—you asked Wingate to resign because of that fight with me?"

"That is true."

"You—you supposed that it was all Wingate's fault?"

"You led me to suppose so, and you made out your case," said the Head sharply. "And as Wingate had no defence to make—"

"Well, it wasn't Wingate's fault, sir," mumbled Loder.

"What?"

"I—I was quite as much to blame as he was, sir. It—it's been weighing on my mind since, and I feel bound to tell you frankly."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, sir. I—I'm afraid that—that in the heat of the moment I didn't make myself quite clear, sir, and—and if I threw too

much of the blame upon Wingate—I—I'm sorry," stammered Loder.

The Head fixed him with a cold glance. "Am I to understand, Loder, that you exonerate Wingate from blame, and take the blame upon your own shoulders?"

"Ye-es, sir," said the prefect desperately.

There was a pause.

"I hardly know what to answer, Loder. You have certainly deceived me; but as you come to me to confess it, I am willing to believe that you did not intend to do so. But do you see that you have caused me to act with injustice towards Wingate?"

"I am very sorry, sir. That—that's why I came here, sir, because—because it struck me in that light," said Loder, lying with the ease that comes of long practice. "But it will be all right, sir, if—if you reinstate Wingate—"

Dr. Locke shook his head.

"I cannot repair an injustice by committing another, Loder," he said. "That would be unjust to Coker, who has given no cause for complaint."

"He's messing everything up, sir."

"That is the business of the boys who elected him. If, after a term, serious complaints are made, I might interfere; but it is not to be expected that I shall interfere to depose a captain of the school who was elected only two days ago. If Coker should choose to resign, I would reinstate Wingate at once, without an election. I certainly should not allow you to put up for an election again, Loder, after what you have told me."

"I don't ask it, sir; but—but you might turn Coker out—"

"It is a very serious position," said the Head. "However, I will think it over. What you have told me certainly lets new light on the matter, and I may think fit to order a fresh election between Coker and Wingate. I will speak to Wingate about it, and I will make known my decision to-morrow."

"But, sir, to-night—"

"I must have time to consider, Loder. You may go," said the Head coldly.

And Loder went.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Coker Distinguishes Himself!

THE next day was Saturday—the day of the Lantham match.

Greyfriars was looking forward to the match with far from pleasant feelings.

Coker was the only fellow in the school who felt anything like confidence. Even the members of his eleven were not very hopeful. Each of them, certainly, had the fullest confidence in his own powers as a footballer. But with a duffer like Coker for captain—there was the rub!

Many members of the Fifth had talked to Coker, and many had given him broad hints.

Coker was deaf to talking to, and he was blind to the broadest hints. Horace Coker had marked out the path he meant to follow, and he was following it. As they thought of the coming match, the fellows who had elected him began to think that even Loder might possibly have been a better alternative.

After dinner the Greyfriars fellows began to throng round the footer-ground. They did not expect to see what might be called a game; but there was a painful interest in seeing Greyfriars receive the biggest licking in the school record.

Coker came down to the ground with the team, and a chorus greeted him. It was not a flattering chorus. The enthusiasm even of the youngest fags for their new captain had vanished. Even Nugent minor was heard to declare that he would rather fag for Loder again than see the school in such a ghastly mess.

"Here comes Coker!"

"Why don't you ask Wingate to captain the team, Coker?"

"Why don't you ask a fag?"

"Half-time score—hundred goals to nil!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker glanced round serenely.

"You just wait a bit, you chaps!" he said.

"You'll see what you will see! You take my word for it!"

"Well, there's no doubt about that," said Frank Nugent. "But what we shall see is the biggest walloping Greyfriars has ever had."

"Resign, Coker!" roared a score of voices.

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"Rats!" said Coker. "Why, only a day or two ago you were cheering me like thunder! Set of silly asses, I call you!"

"And he's quite right," said Bob Cherry. "That's what we are—silly asses! But it's all North's fault for not standing for captain. We'd have elected him!"

"It's all Loder's fault for not letting well alone!" growled Blundell of the Fifth. "And Loder's jolly well going to pay for it, too!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "Here come the Lantham chaps!"

The Lantham team had arrived in their brake.

Coker greeted the visiting team with great dignity. Drake, the Lantham skipper, looked surprised as he shook hands with Coker. He knew the Greyfriars fellows pretty well, and he had seen Coker play.

"Where's Wingate?" he asked.

"Not playing."

"Crooked?"

"No, he's not skipper now," Coker explained.

"Who's skipper, then?"

"I am!"

Drake jumped.

"You!"

"Yes, said Coker emphatically. "I'm captain of Greyfriars now, and I'm captaining the eleven. What are you sniggering at?"

The Lantham skipper gasped.

"Was I sniggering? Excuse me! All—all right."

"We're ready!" snapped Coker.

There was a grim silence in the crowd of spectators when the teams turned out into the field.

The Lantham team were a good set. Most of them were powerful fellows, considerably bigger than the Greyfriars Fifth-Formers who opposed them. The best team Greyfriars could have put into the field would have found it hard to play them. And Coker's eleven was not even the best the Fifth could have provided. Not that a good team would have made much difference with Coker playing centre-forward and giving orders. Coker's only idea of football was kick and rush; and other qualities are required in a football skipper.

Coker won the toss, and the teams lined up, and Lantham kicked off.

"Now look out for fireworks!" said Bob Cherry; and Hurree Jamset Singh declared that the fireworkfulness would be terrific.

And indeed the fireworks were not long in coming.

Lantham began with a rush that carried them right through the home half, and in three minutes they were hotly attacking goal.

Greens, in goal did very well; but he was bewildered by the rain of shots, and he soon let a ball pass him.

There was a groan round the field.

"Goal!"

Bob Cherry looked at his watch.

"Five minutes!" he remarked. "At the same rate, Lantham will finish up with fourteen goals to nil!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It isn't a giddy laughing matter!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Lantham will go away grinning at us—and we shall deserve it."

"The grinfulness will be terrific."

The teams returned to the centre of the field. The Lantham men had gone through the Greyfriars side something like a knife through butter; and they were smiling as they lined up. Coker was looking very grim.

He meant his team to do better than that, and he meant to set them a brilliant example.

Greyfriars succeeded in getting into the enemy's territory after the kick-off. Coker rushed for the ball and trapped it, and rushed for goal. There was a shout round the field, but Coker did not heed it.

"Chuck it!"

"Stop, you ass!"

"Don't play the giddy goat!"

Coker would not have understood the shouts if he had listened to them; but he didn't listen. He rushed the ball goalward, and kicked.

The Lantham goalie was standing with his hands in the pockets of his football shorts, and grinning. He did not take his hands out of his pockets. He could have stopped Coker's shot with perfect ease, but he did not. The ball whizzed into the net.

Coker panted and glanced round at the sea of faces. He had done well—he had set his team an example—and he waited for a stunning burst of cheering.

But he waited in vain; the cheering didn't come. Instead of the cheering there came, to the astonishment of Coker, such cries as these:

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

"Chump!"

"Duffer!"

"Frabjous ass!"

"It's a goal, you idiots!" roared Coker.

"Don't you know a goal when you see one?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ass!"

"Fathead!"

"Off-side, you chump!"

"Off-side, you burbling duffer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!" growled Coker.

The teams were laughing, the referee was chucking. The crowd roared. Coker's face went crimson. He had been so palpably off-side when he captured the ball and rushed for goal that the Lanthamites had not taken the trouble to stop him, and the goalie had not bothered to save, certain that the goal would be disallowed.

"I—I say, was that off-side?" stammered Coker, turning an appealing glance upon Mr. Lascelles, the mathematics master, who was refereeing the match.

"Of course it was, Coker. The goal does not count."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Coker! Why don't you play marbles?"

"Why don't you play hop-scotch, and leave footer alone?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker's face was like unto a newly-boiled brook when play was resumed. His own team was growing and chipping him unmercifully, and the Lantham men were laughing so much that they nearly allowed Greyfriars to score a goal; but not quite. The goalie saved, and the play went away to the home end. Greene failed once more, and the ball went in. Five minutes later it went in again; three minutes, and another goal.

"Four up!" said Frank Nugent. "I say, you chaps, shall we duck him in the fountain after the match?"

"Yes, rather!"

"The duckfulness ought to be terrific."

Just before the whistle went for half-time, Coker distinguished himself again. He charged a Lantham man off the ball, and the whistle rang out. Coker had charged blindly in the penalty area—result, one more goal for Lantham. Then came half-time, with the visitors five up.

During the interval Coker mopped himself with a towel, and had the pleasure of listening to the comments his followers passed upon his play and his leadership. They discussed what ought to be done with Coker with a charming disregard for his feelings as he heard them. Greene thought a flogging would do, Potter suggested ducking in the fountain, Fitzgerald far and feathers, while some of the fellows considered that nothing short of boiling in oil would meet the case.

Coker was not feeling happy as he led his men into battle for the second half.

It began to dawn on him that it was not all honey to be captain of an exacting team, and far from pleasant to be chief on a losing side, especially when the side attributed defeat to his captainship.

Coker played up hard in the second half. He succeeded in getting off-side for a record number of times, and he presented Lantham with a couple more penalty goals. If he got in a player's way at a critical moment, it was sure to be a Greyfriars player; and if he trapped a pass, it was certain to be a pass he ought to have left alone.

Yells of derision and shouts of laughter greeted all Coker's efforts, and he began to be glad when the game drew towards a close.

Lantham had scored nine goals in all, and they were not troubling to score any more. They were laughing too much. Even if the desperate efforts of the Greyfriars team might have had some effect, Coker was sure to render them ineffective with his terrible aid; and the team gave it up in despair at last, and took no notice of their captain. When Mr. Lascelles blew the whistle at last, and the Lantham men trooped off with a total of nine goals to nil in their favour, the Greyfriars followed them with drooping heads.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Exit Captain Coker!

"COLLAR HIM!"

"Jump on him!"

"Pile on him!"

"Squash him!"

Horace Coker came off the field looking, as Bob Cherry put it, much less Coker than

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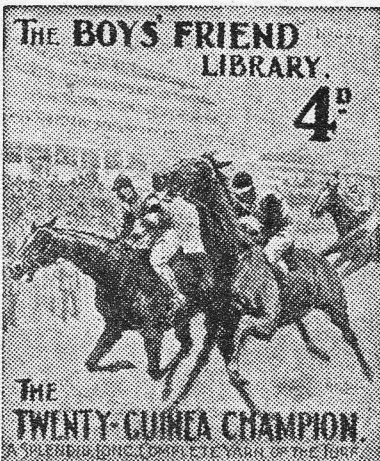
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THE POPULAR.—No. 153.

NEXT FRIDAY!

"A MUG'S GAME!"

A GRAND TALE OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

usual. He gave a startled jump as the loud and vengeful shouts burst upon his ears, and he saw the crowd closing round him.

"Here! Hands off!" he gasped.
 "Collar him!"
 "Don't let him get away!"
 "Slaughter him!"
 Coker made a rush to get through the avengers. He burst through the crowd, and dashed for the School House, with the mob of them racing at his heels. The fellows were wildly excited; they wanted to get hold of Captain Coker, and they wanted it badly. Coker wanted just as badly, or still more badly, to get away from them.

He fled at top-speed towards the School House, with the wild mob raging at his heels.

"Stop him!"
 "Collar him!"
 "Duck him!"
 "Squash him and slaughter him!"
 "Oh, my hat!" gasped Coker. "Oh, my aunt! Oh, crumbs and jiminy!"
 He dashed into the House.
 "After him!"

And the avenging mob poured in. Coker was grasped in the doorway, and he rolled on the floor. Over him rolled the avengers.
 "Ow!" bellowed Coker. "Ow! Help! Rescue! Yow!"

"Give him goals!"
 "Give him nine goals to nil!"
 "Bump him!"
 "Slaughter him!"

And really it did look for a moment as if the unfortunate captain of Greyfriars would be slaughtered.

Fortunately Mr. Prout hurried out of his study in time.

"Goodness, gracious, my boys!" he exclaimed. "What ever is the matter? What is that wriggling underneath you?"

"Ow!" came a muffled groan from Coker. "It's me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Dear me! Let Coker get up at once!"

The avengers reluctantly released their victim. Coker sat up, in tatters, with a blazing face and dishevelled hair, and gasping for breath.

"What ever does this mean?" exclaimed Mr. Prout.

"It means that we're fed up with Coker, sir!" yelled a score of voices.

"Yah!" said Coker.
 "Resign!"

"Yah! Rats! I won't!"
 "Jump on him!"
 "Slaughter him!"

"Order!" rapped out Mr. Prout. "I shall cane any boy who touches Coker! Order! There is a notice on the board that you have not seen, I think, and if you are not satisfied with Coker as your captain—"

There was a rush to the notice-board at once.

And as the fellows saw the notice there was a cheer. Coker, in alarm, staggered to the board, and gasped as he read. The notice was in the Head's handwriting.

"NOTICE TO THE SCHOOL!"

"It having come to light that George Wingate, the late captain of Greyfriars, was asked to resign his post under a misapprehension on my part, I have decided to cancel the late election. A fresh election will be held in the lecture-hall this evening at six o'clock, and George Wingate, at my request, is a candidate.
 Signed,
 "H. Locke (Headmaster)."

The Greyfriars fellows read the notice, and simply gasped with joy. Horace Coker did not gasp with joy. He frowned. There was a roar.

"Hurray for the Head!"
 "Good old Wingate!"

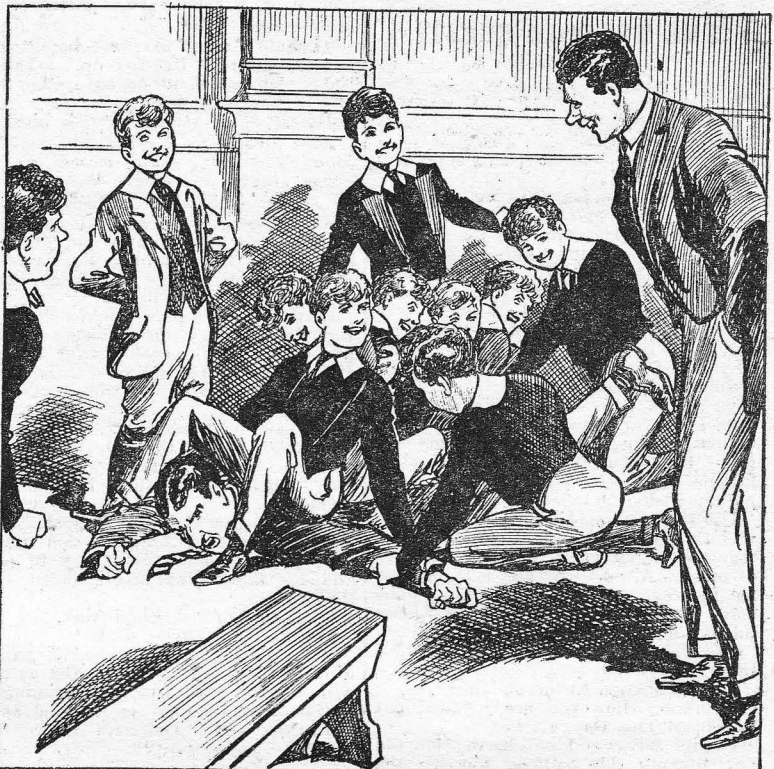
"How are you going to vote, old man?" demanded Bob Cherry, giving Harry Wharton a terrific thump on the back.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well," said Coker, "I'm blest if I care! It isn't much catch being captain of Greyfriars, when I come to think of it. You're not satisfied when you get a first-class footballer to captain you, so I don't know really what you want!"

"First-class rats! Go and eat coke!"

"This has come just in time to save your life, Coker," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Gentlemen, under the happy circumstances of the case, I vote we spare Coker's life!"



"Buck up, you fellows!" yelled Dicky Nugent. An army of fags descended upon Loder like an avalanche, and the prefect was rolled over on the floor—then several of the fags sat on him. "That's right!" Coker shouted. "Stand by me!" (See Chapter 1.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Oh, rats!" said Coker, dabbing his nose with his handkerchief. "I've a jolly good mind to resign; still, as I think perhaps there are enough sensible chaps to know a good captain when they see one, I shall put up for election again. All the fellows who want me for captain can roll up at six o'clock!"

"There won't be much rolling, I guess," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Gentlemen!" said Hobson of the Shell. "Every chap is free to vote for whom he likes, but any chap who votes for Coker will be jumped on, squashed, and spifficated!"

"Hear, hear!"

Horace Coker was allowed to totter away—as Wharton said, his life was spared. A yell of laughter followed him as he went up to the Fifth-Form dormitory to change. He required a change.

When the clock-tower rolled out the hour of six the lecture-hall was crammed.

Wingate of the Sixth was there with North, and the late captain of Greyfriars was looking very genial. Exactly how much he owed to Loder's late repentance he did not know; but he was willing to believe that the prefect was sorry for the harm he had done. At all events, there he was, ready to stand for election; and there wasn't much doubt which way the election would go.

Coker of the Fifth came in, newly brushed and tidy, and looking very determined. He meant to put the matter to the test, anyway. If a majority of the fellows wanted him for captain, there he was, ready to stand the test of the election. A good-humoured laugh greeted Coker. The fellows did not feel angry with him now; in the relief at the prospect of getting their old captain back again they could forgive Coker; and, after all, he had saved them from Loder. A few loyal fellows even gave Coker a cheer.

Mr. Prout and Mr. Quelch, as before, conducted the election. Coker and Wingate were announced as the candidates, and a show of hands was called for.

"Hands up for George Wingate!"

A forest of hands ascended in the air. Even Walker and Carne and the rest of

Loder's satellites put their hands up. Even Vernon-Smith raised his hand. The Form-masters smiled as they counted.

The result was announced amid a general smile.

"Two hundred votes for Wingate!"
 Horace Coker's face lengthened. There was a cheer.

"Bravo, Wingate!"
 "Hooray!"

"Hands up for Coker!"

A single hand went up. It was the hand of Coker minor of the Sixth, the younger brother of the great Coker. Horace Coker gave his minor an affectionate grin, and then laughed.

"Two hundred votes for Wingate, and one vote for Horace Coker!" announced Mr. Prout. "George Wingate is duly elected captain of Greyfriars."

Then there was a roar.

The excited crowd gave Wingate three times three, and one over. Then there was another cheer as Coker came forward and shook hands with Wingate.

"You've got it, Wingate!" he said. "And—and I shouldn't wonder if the chaps are right after all. Anyway, I'm fed up with being captain, and you're welcome."

"Thanks!" said Wingate.

"Give old Coker a cheer!" shouted Bob Cherry. "He's a good sort of ass, after all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Bravo, Coker!"

Then, with another ringing cheer for Wingate, the meeting broke up.

George Wingate was captain of Greyfriars once more, and his position was more secure than ever; as Nugent remarked, the fellows were likely to think twice before they risked having a captain like Coker again. It was likely to be a long time before Greyfriars forgot the brief but eventful reign of Captain Coker!

THE END.

(There will be another splendid long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's issue of the POPULAR.)

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THE TRAITOR GUEST!

(Continued from page 6)

Phyllis pressed his arm.
"It was just like you, Jimmy!"
"It was," said Jimmy. "I suppose I was born a fool!"

"I don't mean that. It was generous, like you. But—but—"

Jimmy Silver compressed his lips.
"I'll look into this," he said. "Don't you be afraid, Phil. They've only known one another a few days, anyway. I'll see about it, and if Lattrey—"

"Jimmy, you must not—Remember, he is your guest!" exclaimed Phyllis, with a catch in her voice.

Jimmy nodded.
"I know that, Phil. The cad feels safe, I dare say. But, anyway, I'm going to look into it. Wait a bit for me, old girl. If Lattrey's up to his old tricks he's going to be stopped sharp!"

Jimmy Silver hurried out of the house. His face was pale with anger. There was no proof yet, but suspicions fitted together so much that they had the force of proof. After all, it was nothing new for Lattrey. He was treacherous to the core. He had always been so, as Jimmy Silver knew.

But if he had played this treacherous trick there would be a final reckoning.

Jimmy hurried to the old tower.

"Hallo! Here you are!" called out Lovell. "This way, slacker!"
Jimmy Silver did not heed. He did not answer. He ran on towards the half-ruined tower, leaving Arthur Edward Lovell staring.

In a few minutes Jimmy was in the tower. There was no one in the lower chambers, and he ran quickly and lightly up the steps.

"Shuffle, kid!"
It was Lattrey's silky voice from a room that opened on the spiral stairs half-way up the tower.

Jimmy drew a quick breath. There was proof if he needed it. His footsteps were heard the next moment, and he heard an alarmed voice in the room. It was Algy's voice.

"Somebody's comin'! Oh, Jimmy!"
Jimmy Silver strode into the room the next moment.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Lattrey's Luck is Out!

LATTREY sprang to his feet.
He had been seated on a camp-stool in the deserted room, near the old loop-hole window.

On a box before him the cards lay gleaming, and there were loose coins and cigarettes on the box.

The atmosphere of the room was heavy with cigarette-smoke.

Algy Silver sat on the corner of the box with a cigarette in his mouth. He did not rise. He seemed frozen there by the sudden appearance of his cousin Jimmy.

Lattrey's face paled.
He retained his coolness, but he was pale. The game was up now with a vengeance. The discovery was about as complete as it could be.

Jimmy Silver panted.
"Lattrey, you cowardly hound!"
"Look here, Jimmy—" mumbled the fag.

Jimmy turned on the fag fiercely.
"Hold your tongue, you young black-guard! By gad, I've a mind to take you by the neck and take you straight to my father! You shady young rotter,

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how dare you play this game in my father's house!"

"I didn't want to come here," said Algy sullenly. "I'm fed up. I had to come. I'm goin' to do as I like, too. 'Tain't your business!"

Jimmy Silver strode towards him.
Algy jumped up and backed away, but Jimmy's strong grasp closed on his collar, and he was shaken like a rat.

"Let go!" yelled Algy furiously.

Shake, shake, shake! It was for Phyllis' sake that Jimmy did not give his cousin the thrashing he deserved. But the sportive Algy was shaken like a rat in the teeth of a terrier.

Lattrey made a move for the doorway. But the doorway was suddenly blocked by the sturdy form of Arthur Edward Lovell. Lovell had followed Jimmy into the tower, wondering what was the matter.

He saw now what was the matter. His eyes blazed at the sight of the cards and the money. As Lattrey came to the door, Lovell shoved him back unceremoniously.

"Let me pass!" hissed Lattrey.
"You sneaking worm!" said Lovell between his teeth. "You try to pass, and I'll knock your teeth down your throat!"

"Let me go!" shrieked Algy.

Shake, shake, shake, shake!

"There, you young rascal!" panted Jimmy Silver, releasing the fag at last, with a whirl that sent him spinning to the door. "Let me catch you at it again, that's all! Get out!"

"You—you rotter!"

"Here, you travel along!" said Lovell, taking the furious fag by the shoulder and spinning him out of the room.

"Shall I kick him downstairs, Jimmy?"
Algy did not wait for Jimmy's reply. He scuttled down the stairs, breathing fury.

Jimmy Silver faced Lattrey.

The cad of Rookwood had recovered himself now. He was a guest in the house, and even after his wicked rascality he felt that he had, at least, no punishment to fear. He regarded his enraged host with a sneering smile.

"You unspeakable cad!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

Lattrey shrugged his shoulders.
"I was a fool to think you could be decent, you worm; but you knew I trusted you, and—and you've led my cousin into this filthy gambling under my very nose!"

"He didn't want much leading!" sneered Lattrey. "Accordin' to his yarns, he's quite used to it at school. Merry young blade, in fact!"

"You're older than he is. You know better. He's a young fool, but you're a rotten scoundrel!"

"Thanks!"
"You—you cowardly hound!"

"Are you always as polite as this to a guest?" inquired Lattrey, with insolent coolness. "Is this the special Silver brand of hospitable courtesy?"

Jimmy choked.
"Lick him!" said Lovell. "Thrash the measly skunk, Jimmy! I'll hold your jacket, old man!"

"I—I can't hit him! He's a guest, as he says!" gasped Jimmy Silver.
"Lattrey, you cad, you know you're safe! You've got to get out! You leave the house to-day—by the next train!"

"Pleased!" yawned Lattrey. "I hate to mention it, dear boy, but I've been bored almost to tears during this cheery holiday!"

Jimmy clenched his hands convulsively. He was very near at that moment

to disregarding the sacred laws of hospitality. But he controlled himself.

"Get out!" he muttered thickly.

"Certainly! Ta-ta, old scout! Can I offer you a smoke before I go?"

"Aren't you going to kick him?" shouted Lovell.

"Hang it! No! He's a guest!"

"Well, he's your guest," admitted Lovell. "I suppose it isn't according to the laws of hospitality to punch a guest. But he's not my guest; he's not under my merry roof. No reason why I shouldn't thrash him, and I'm jolly well going to!"

"Lovell—"

"Rats!"

"Hands off!" yelled Lattrey, as Arthur Edward Lovell rushed on him.

Crash! Crash!
Lovell's fists came fairly crashing at Lattrey, and the cad of Rookwood put up his hands desperately to defend himself.

But his defence availed little against Lovell's attack. Blows fairly rained on his savage, furious face. Round and round the room Lovell drove him under a shower of fierce blows.

Jimmy Silver looked on. He could not touch Lattrey himself, but, as Lovell had said, Lattrey was his guest, not Lovell's, and Lovell could do as he liked. And he did. For five minutes the cad of Rookwood felt as if he were the centre of several cyclones.

A terrific right-hander sent him spinning through the doorway at last, and he sprawled down on the stone steps.

A yell rang on the staircase. Lovell rushed after him.

"Hold on, you cad! You're not thrashed yet! My hat! He's off!"

Lattrey was bolting down the steps three at a time. He vanished from sight almost in a twinkling.

An hour later Lattrey was in the train, having departed without taking leave of anyone. He was not likely to darken the doors of Jimmy Silver's home again.

Lattrey's sudden departure caused some surprise, but he was not missed.

Phyllis, at least, was glad that he had gone. And the sportive Algy, relieved of his evil associate, found healthier occupations for his time than banker and nap and billiards; and he found, too, that he could enjoy a holiday without those questionable resources to help him out.

Lattrey had gone, and Jimmy Silver did not expect to see him again till the new term at Rookwood.

But, as a matter of fact, he was not quite done with Lattrey. Before the Christmas holidays were over the chums of Rookwood had more to do with Jimmy Silver's Guest.

THE END.

(Particulars for next week's story will be found on page 20.)

RESULT OF "POPLETS" COMPETITION NO. 39.

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A GRAND TALE OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS. ::
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By OWEN CONQUEST.

NEXT FRIDAY!

"A MUG'S GAME!"

THE INVISIBLE RAIDER!

BY SIDNEY DREW



A MAGNIFICENT NEW
SERIAL OF ADVENTURE
— INTRODUCING —
FERRERS LORD AND
PRINCE CHING LUNG.



CHARACTERS IN THE STORY.

FERRERS LORD, the famous millionaire adventurer, and owner of the Lord of the Deep.
PRINCE CHING LUNG, a very old friend of Lord's, who has accompanied the millionaire on many adventures.

GAN WAGA, an Eskimo, who belongs to the crew of the yacht, and who is ever on the look-out to play japes on his shipmates. Greatly attached to Ching Lung.

RUPERT THURSTON, a young Englishman, and friend of Lord's.

HAL HONOUR, known as the man of silence, engineer of Ferrers Lord's wonderful submarine. Honour has invented a marvellous paint which causes things to become invisible when painted with it. He has also built a new kind of aeroplane which he calls a helicopter, and which is covered with this new paint, but which is destroyed by

KARL VON KREIGLER, a mysterious professor, who has great power in Germany, and who holds the secret of Germany's great treasure-chest. Ferrers Lord has ferreted out one or two of the professor's secrets, and Von Kreigler realises that Lord is a very dangerous man. After this attack, Ferrers Lord despatches Rupert Thurston, with Honour and Ching Lung, with a message to Kreigler.

They are detained, but escape, after many exciting adventures.

Thurston & Co. return to the yacht, where Ferrers Lord has been waiting for them. The yacht returns to England again, and Ferrers Lord & Co. set about building a new aeroplane.

Von Kreigler holds a council at the general's house, and arranges a ball to hide his movements. But Ferrers Lord discovers the plot, and pays the Supreme Council a surprise visit. Although the house is full of troops and guests, Ferrers Lord kidnaps both the professor and the general, and takes them on board the helicopter which is waiting outside the grounds. They get away unseen. On board the aeroplane, General Goltzheimer gives vent to his feelings by insulting Ferrers Lord and his companions. "You are a bully and pirate!" he said. The millionaire's eyes hardened.

(Now read on.)

The Reward for Being Kind!

It is a very good thing for you, General Goltzheimer, that you are a prisoner!" said Ferrers Lord. "It is good for you also that I am an English gentleman!"

He bowed and walked through the open panel behind the mirror. As it closed behind him, Goltzheimer leapt to his feet. Before Von Kreigler could interfere, the general picked up a heavy chair, and hurled it at the mirror with all his force. A great star appeared in the mirror, and fragments of broken glass tinkled down. Again the shattered mirror slid back, revealing Ferrers Lord. He put his hand on the bell.

"If you cannot control your temper, general, you will compel me to put you where these little outbursts can do no harm," he said quietly.

"Of course you would, you swine of a British bully!" shouted the angry Prussian.

The big, red-faced man toppled backwards. There was a terrific crash. The submarine seemed to be toppling over. The floor of the saloon was at a steep angle. Von Kreigler rolled out of his chair, and tumbled down the slope as the door was forced open.

"Quick!" cried Hal Honour's voice. "Something has gone over us!"

Luckily the heavy mahogany table was firmly screwed to the floor. Ferrers Lord clung to it. Von Kreigler had sprawled on top of the general. Slowly the submarine righted. Hal Honour dragged Kreigler through the doorway by the collar. A blow on the head from the leg of a descending chair had rendered the Prussian unconscious. The millionaire pulled him away. Honour had dashed to the pumps, hoping to empty the

tanks, fill them with compressed air, and bring the submarine to the surface. She did not appear to be leaking, and the electric light had not failed; but the pumps refused to work. All the men were at their stations, and perfectly calm and collected. The millionaire hurried to the engine-room.

"Jammed!" said Hal Honour.

Something big had gone over them just as they were rising, some vessel that must have wandered out of her proper course.

"She must have scraped aft of the conning-tower," said Thurston. "It's astonishing she didn't cut a hole clean through us."

"If we had been a fathom higher, we'd have been in two halves, tough as she is," said Ferrers Lord coolly. "They must have been pretty startled, too!"

"By honey! I shouldn't wonder if it was the yacht, sir," said Prout. "That's the sort of thing Barry O'Rooney would do, the silly gardener!"

Honour was examining the pumps. The tanks were nearly filled with sea-water. The pumps would not act, but as the vessel did not appear to be leaking, the matter was not very serious, though it was irritating. Even a long delay under water was not dangerous, for they had plenty of oxygen to purify the air if it should become exhausted. There was practically nothing that Harold Honour could not repair.

Goltzheimer soon recovered. A black eye did not add to his beauty, and he was hurt and furious. Von Kreigler's face was as white as chalk, for though he had plenty of brains, he was an arrant coward. Ching Lung came along, and ordered them back to the saloon.

"I don't know whether there is any great danger or not, Excellency," he said, in

answer to the professor's whining question. "Perhaps not more dangerous than the galleries of Schloss Schwartzburg, when you pumped the water in on us. Go back to the saloon, and keep quiet!"

"But you will not shut the door, Mr. Thurston!" pleaded the terrified professor. "Do not let us drown like rats, I implore you, Herr Thurston!"

"Isn't that rather what you tried to do to us?" said Rupert. "Very well; I'll leave the door open, but don't attempt to venture out and wander about without permission."

The submarine was practically on an even keel. She had begun to leak a little aft of the conning-tower from a strained plate. This leak was located, and when the lower plates had been cut away and the lining removed, the inflow was quickly stopped. Still the condition of the pumps made Honour shake his head.

"Bad!" he said. "Hours!"

"Had better lift her, Honour?" asked Ferrers Lord.

The engineer nodded. The millionaire beckoned Ching Lung, and the two entered the diving chamber. Skilled hands quickly helped them to don their diving-dresses, and then closed the water-tight doors. Ching Lung opened the valves, and the chamber filled with water. Lighting his lamp, the millionaire opened the outer door and walked out. A touch on Ching Lung's shoulder formed a telephonic communication, and they could converse together with the utmost ease.

"I suppose it must be half a mile to the yacht's moorings," said Ferrers Lord. "It can't have been the Lord of the Deep that scraped over us, for I wirelessed O'Rooney from the helicopter to stay where he was till he heard more. She ought to be along to the right here, but it is an awkward bottom."

The bottom was sandy, but it was littered with rocks and boulders and awkward tangles of seaweed. The lamps threw a powerful light ahead, and they picked their way cautiously. They were well accustomed to it, and the diving suits were beautifully balanced, and felt light and easy. At last the millionaire's lamp, roaming about in the glassy gloom, with inquisitive fish gathering in the rays like moths round a candle, rested on an anchor and great steel cable.

"We might have done a good deal worse, Ching," he said. "We found this pretty easily. Let me up slowly, or I may contract a headache."

Ching Lung unwound the cord that was fastened round his belt. Knotting the cord round one of his ankles, the millionaire unbuckled the leather shot-bag he carried. Ferrers Lord used no air-pumps, tubes, or life-lines. The air they breathed was compressed. As it became exhausted it passed out of their helmets in gleaming bubbles. Naturally, as the air was used up, they

THE POPULAR.—No. 153.

NEXT FRIDAY!

"SAVED FROM THE SEA!"

SPLendid STORY OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS. By FRANK RICHARDS.

became heavier, and it was more difficult to move. The simple device of carrying a bag containing bullets rectified that. By dropping a lead bullet now and then the divers could keep a perfect balance.

"Gently, Ching!" said Ferrers Lord. "There may be a strong tide up there. When I try three times, let go. You don't mind going back alone, I hope?"

Directly he discarded the weight the millionaire began to rise. Ching Lung paid out the cord carefully. Even at the bottom he could feel the rush of the tide, and it was certain to be running more strongly at the surface. He shone his lamp upwards. A violent jerk told him that Ferrers Lord had reached the surface. Then through the goggles of his helmet Ferrers Lord saw the outline of the yacht's port side towering high above him, and waved his lamp. A cry he did not hear rang from the deck.

"Light forward to port! Show a leg!" "Ay, ay! Show a leg, bedad!" cried Barry O'Rooney. "Phwat's that he's winking? Lower a boat, you lubbers, and be mighty quick about it!"

A boat was lowered in sharp time. Three tugs came at the end of the cord, and Ching Lung released it. Three minutes later Ferrers Lord was aboard the yacht.

"Bedad, we did get a message, sor!" said Barry. "A great hulkin' thramp sthamer went up, and she sent us a radio telling us to look out as she'd scraped over something harrd. Oi niver dhramed ut was the submarine she'd been playing her dirty tricks on. Nobod' was hurrt. Oi hope, sor!"

"No, but it was a close thing! Get your anchor up, O'Rooney, and run into Chase-guard for a couple of tugs and lighters."

They were barely three miles from the little seaport when the wireless operator came hurrying up to the bridge with a message.

"You may put back to your moorings again, O'Rooney," said Ferrers Lord. "Honour has managed to raise the submarine without our help. Send a boat for two prisoners I want you to take charge of."

He went below. O'Rooney swung the yacht round. The submarine was showing her lights, and though it was windy and choppy and she lay awash, they were soon alongside her. Thurston, Prout, and Ching Lung came aboard with the prisoners. Gan Waga was aboard already, for after his peep at Von Kreigler and General Goltzheimer, that dauntless swimmer had dived through the entrance of the cavern and swum out. After the affair of the York ham and the keg of butter, Gan had found a slight coolness up at the house, and very little to eat on the submarine. That is why the Eskimo had left.

Gan Waga poked his head round the door of Ching Lung's cabin, and grinned at the prince in his usual cheerful way.

"If you're after a cigar, my lad," said Ching Lung, "you can beat it out of this, for there's nothing doing! That cigar stunt is played out. You'll ruin me, if I let you. There were nearly thirty in the box when I last looked, and now it's as empty as your head! You're an abominable thief, Gan!"

"Never yo' mind, Chingy, old dears!" said Gan Waga. "What yo' gotted is mine, Chingy, and what mine is all my owns! Don't be meanness, Chingy, fo' I just dying for a smoke! I not many, Chingy—only ten or fifty. I nots smoke a cigar nots fo' years and years and years and weeks and months!"

"Why, you fibber, you were smoking one not a couple of hours ago! I saw you myself," said Ching Lung. "How can you tell crams at that rate?"

"I mean, it seems years and years and years, Chingy! I not means to tell crams. Is it worseness to tell crams, or to pinch things? If yo' not give me some, I pinch them, Chingy, and then it will be yo' faults. Only sixteen or two, Chingy. Yo' be awful sorryfuls if yo' makes me a thief, old ducks!"

Ching Lung unlocked a drawer and produced a box of cigars. Ching Lung was wealthy, but he found it an expensive item to keep the Eskimo supplied with choice Havanas. And Gan Waga only liked the very best, and to smoke two at once.

"Three, then," said the prince, "and not

another till the day after to-morrow. You'd ruin the Bank of England!"

"Ho, ho, ho! Yo' quite a niceness boy, Chingy!" grinned the Eskimo. "I say, who the fatness chaps with the red faces and neck?"

"I don't remember any fat chap with a red face and neck."

"Oh, yes, yo' do, Chingy! I have a look through the window of the submarine. He gotted a lot of ribbons and medals and a big red nose," said the Eskimo, lighting a couple of cigars. "A soldier chap, Chingy, with a uniforms and slippers, my old beauty!"

"Oh, I follow you now, my plump friend!" said Ching Lung. "He is a famous German general, with a pretty name. He is General von Goltzheimer."

"Von whats, Chingy?"

"General Goltzheimer. I'm not sure about the 'von,' but, anyhow, he is General Goltzheimer, a Prussian officer from Prussia."

"That a rotten names, Chingy! I not like it a bit. If I tried to say it, it give me an awfulness toothaches. What yo' brought him fo', Chingy?"

Ching Lung was not inclined to try and explain the position to Gan Waga, for that would have taken too long. With both cigars in full blast, Gan Waga strolled away. A steward was carrying a tray into one of the larger cabins. When the man opened the door Gan caught sight of the Prussian. The man's red face fascinated the Eskimo, or perhaps it was the uniform and black eye. Gan Waga walked in to have a closer look at him.

Gan Waga was rather a surprising spectacle himself. The general glared at him with his sound eye, for the other was half-closed.

"Hallo, old red necks! What's yo' gene and done to yo' eyes?" inquired the Eskimo, who was not at all bashful.

"Away! Who are you—yes? Go away!" growled the general.

Goltzheimer was alone, for Professor von Kriegler had retired to bed in a very melancholy and terrified state of mind.

"I think you had better go away," said the steward, putting the tray down. "He looks anything but gentle, and he doesn't speak much English, Gan."

"Dears, dears! But why he gotted such a red nose and red neck?" asked the interested Eskimo. "I never see nobody with a redder neck!"

Gan had suffered from an occasional black eye himself, and Gan was a kindly soul. He made for the cold-room, and presently returned. In spite of his sorrows, the general could eat and drink. He was digging his knife in a veal-and-ham pie, with the steward in attendance, when Gan Waga sidled in. Again the Prussian glared at him. With a cigar in each corner of his mouth, Gan beamed at him. Then, with all the kindness and well-meaning in the world—for he meant to be nice—Gan took about three-quarters of a pound of raw beefsteak out of the breast-pocket of his striped pyjama-jacket, and clapped it over General Goltzheimer's damaged optic.

It is a sad earth, and in it our noblest motives and actions are apt to be misjudged. Gan was well aware that raw steak has a soothing and cooling effect. The Prussian let out a terrific roar of rage and disgust. His red moustache bristled, his neck swelled, his sound eye glared fire and flame. The next moment Gan was shrieking, for the big Prussian had taken him by the ears, and was banging his face down on the table.

In one respect, the Eskimo was rather lucky, for Goltzheimer was banging his face against the veal-and-ham pie, and even the hardest-baked piecrust is seldom as hard as the surface of a mahogany table.

"O-oh, helps! Chingy! O-oh, murders! O-oh, my noses! Helps—helps! Don't do it—don'ts!" shrieked the Eskimo, between the jerks.

Before the petrified steward could interfere, Gan Waga was sitting outside the door of the cabin, scraping the pie from his face, while the steward tried to pacify the general, who stormed and bawled.

Mournfully, and without any cigars, Gan Waga limped down to Ching Lung.

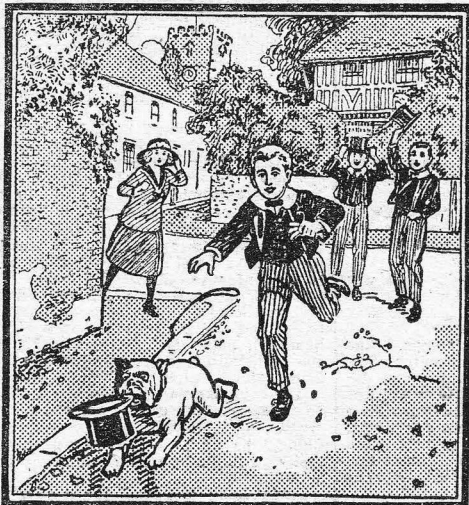
"Oh, Chingy," he moaned, "I think I burned my nose and teeth! I never be kind no more, Chingy—never, never! Oh, dears, dears, dears!"

"Been fighting anybody, old chum?" asked the prince. "Have you and the cook been having another scrap?"

"No, Chingy. It Shoppluffheimers, Chingy!" sighed the Eskimo.

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NEXT
FRIDAY:

"A MUG'S GAME!"

A GRAND TALE OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS.
By OWEN CONQUEST.

"Come again and give me a chance!" said Ching Lung.

"Shuffshappers, Chingy! That bad, fat rascals with the red necks, Chingy. He gotted a black eye, so I fetch some cold steak-beef and put it on his eye. He not grateful, Chingy! He grab me by both ears, and hammer my poor faces in the veal-and-hams pie they gives him fo' suppers. It spoil the pie, but it spoil my face more! Then he chucks me outs, the horridness, fat rascal!"

"Ching wanted to laugh, but this was rather too serious. Whatever Goltzheimer might be, he was a prisoner, and Gan might get into trouble, however innocently he had acted. Ching Lung went to see if he could appease the German before he told his version of it to Ferrers Lord.

"Ten million thunders! Another of them!" roared Goltzheimer. "Yellow and black and brown—the very scum of the earth! Go out of this!"

The general was foaming at the mouth. He imagined that the Eskimo had been sent there to insult him deliberately. Perhaps if Ching Lung had stayed away he would have been acting more wisely. Goltzheimer was absolutely furious, and bellowing like a mad bull. He clutched a table-knife, brandished it, and dashed at the prince.

The yacht gave a slight roll, and the door closed, cutting off Ching Lung's retreat. Crouching, he faced the madman!

Trouble for Gan Waga!

THE changing fortunes of the great world war had brought many unlucky British prisoners into the iron clutch of General Goltzheimer. The Prussian had never gone out of his way to be tender to these men whether officers or privates. They were brutally treated, lashed, and starved, and Goltzheimer was convinced that the swine-hounds thoroughly deserved all this and more for having dared to take up arms against the All-Highest and the magnificent and unconquerable German Empire that was destined to rule the world.

Now that the tables were turned, and the fat Prussian general was himself a prisoner, he expected to be treated with the deference due to a Royal prince. When housed, the savage brute in his domineering Prussian nature revealed itself to the full. Ching Lung would gladly have evaded this unpleasantness, but the unfortunate shutting of the door made a struggle inevitable. Goltzheimer was twice Ching Lung's size, and treble his weight. In addition, the infuriated Hun was armed, and the prince was without a weapon.

The Hun bore down on him with a heavy rush, and Ching Lung dropped to his knees. The knife was rounded and blunt, but with the weight of Goltzheimer's ponderous arm behind it, it was not a thing to be ignored. The savage thrust intended for his heart missed, and, flashing over his shoulder, the knife struck the seasoned mahogany of the door and snapped off short at the ivory haft.

Two fat, perspiring hands closed together on Ching Lung's throat. At the same moment Ching Lung's knees straightened, and both his clenched fists came up between Goltzheimer's arms full against the Prussian's fleshy chin. Had Goltzheimer's neck been less of the bull type, the force of the double blow must have dislocated it. Prince Ching Lung was only a light-weight, but he had been well schooled, and he had learned the trick—the

winning trick—that many clever light-weights can never learn—how to put every ounce of himself behind a blow.

The strangling hands of General Goltzheimer came away limply from his throat as if they had been stricken with palsy. He rocked about on his feet, blinking his bloodshot eyes, and uttered a few grunting coughs before he tumbled heavily forward, butting the door with his head. Someone was trying to open the door. The prince looked down at the stunned giant, gave his throat a few rubbings, and then, grasping the general by the ankles, he dragged him out of the way. The man who entered was Ferrers Lord.

"Well?" asked the millionaire, his forehead puckering into a frown. "What are you doing here, Ching?"

"I'm sorry, Chief, but it was forced on the general."

"For whom?"

"For Gan Waga," answered the prince, after a brief hesitation—"for something poor Gan had done with the best of intentions. The madman attacked me with a table-knife. He got the door instead of me, so I think it must be one of my lucky days. Then he took me by the throat, but left room enough for me to plant both fists on his chin, so I knocked him out."

Ferrers Lord nodded grimly. Whether he was angry or not the prince could not tell, for no man in the world could conceal his real feelings better than Ferrers Lord. With a grunt, the Prussian stirred and rolled over. He looked uglier and more bloated than ever.

"It is almost degrading to have to make war on such a brute," said the millionaire. "He is the most unpleasant prisoner I ever had in custody. Tell Gan Waga from me that he is not to come here in future, Ching, and please send a steward to look after this fellow."

"If he were my prisoner, Chief, I'd look after him pretty strictly," said the prince. "The man isn't safe, for when he gets into one of his fits of passion he's more like a newly-trapped tiger than a human being, and looks it. I can only express my regrets, and assure you that as long as I live in this world it's the very last time I shall attempt to apologise to a Hun. I only attempted it on this occasion because he was a prisoner."

Gan Waga looked quite alarmed when the prince gave him Ferrers Lord's message. Gan had tremendous respect and awe for the millionaire.

"I nots go near that silly old saloons fo' ten thousand years and two minutes, Chingy," he said. "Dears, dears, dears! Anybody can have forty black eyes, fo' me next times, and I nots be kindness no morer. I fed up. The Chief not very angryful, hunk, Chingy?"

"I don't think so, old son!" said Ching Lung comfortingly. "But you really must try to reform!"

"I not know that chaps, Chingy," said the Eskimo. "Who's he when he at homes, hunk? What preforms means, Chingy?"

"The word is reform, and it isn't a chap," said the prince. "It means to amend your naughty ways, and to become a better Eskimo. It means that you must give up stealing kegs of butter and hams, and refrain from cadging cigars. It signifies that you should become a gentleman in the true sense of the word, and do nothing except what a gentleman would do. For instance, no gentleman, who is a gentleman, would put live crabs or lobsters in Barry O'Rooney's bunk. Try to be good, my dear Gan Wagtail, and

you'll be happy. Good-night, my fat but wicked one!"

Gan Waga waddled thoughtfully to the door. He remained there for a moment, running his fingers through his sleek, coal-black hair.

"So longness, Chingy!" he said. "I'll be awfulness politeful and niceeness, and makes yo' proudness of me, Chingy. Nighty-night, my can of baked beans!"

Ching Lung chuckled to himself as he began to undress. It was rather difficult to imagine a reformed Gan Waga. The Eskimo might be serious about it for the moment, for the message from Ferrers Lord had somewhat frightened him.

"Some gentleman!" thought the prince. "Poor old Gan! I wonder what he'll make of it, and how long it will last?"

The Eskimo Gentleman!

CHING LUNG awoke in the dawn of the morn, and discovered an early visitor in the shape of Gan Waga squatting on the carpet.

"How long have you been here, my portly youth?" asked the prince. "I meant to lock my door. You haven't been after my cigars again, have you?"

Gan Waga shook his head. He seemed to have mislaid his wide and merry grin, and looked quite serious and thoughtful.

"No, I nots touched them, Chingy," he said. "I nots pinch yo' cigars, no morer, old dear. I going to be awfulness and heaps good all the times, Chingy!"

"Are you sure you feel quite well, Gan?" grinned Ching Lung. "Put out your tongue and let me look at it, and let me feel your pulse."

"I fitness enough, Chingy," said Gan Waga. "I members what yo' tells me last nights, old sports. I mean to be a proper gents. How yo' do it, Chingy?"

Ching Lung's morning cup of coffee arrived, and when he had drunk it he asked to be supplied with a cigarette and a match. Lying snugly between the sheets, smoking the cigarette, Ching Lung had a heart-to-heart talk with the Eskimo about what a real gentleman should be.

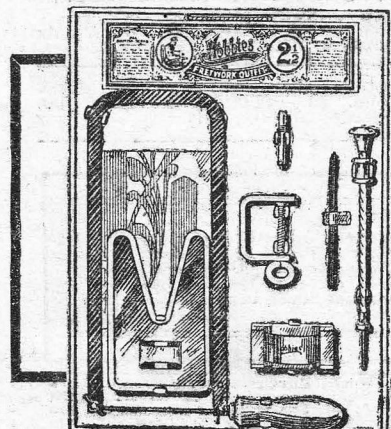
"For instance, fat one, no perfect gentleman eats greasy things with his fingers and then wipes his hands on his hair," explained the prince. "He uses a knife and fork and spoon and a serviette. He does not go roaming about in wet pyjamas and bare feet, but sports boots, spats, a collar and a tie, and sometimes an eyeglass. He is polite to his equals, and even more so to his inferiors. He might greet an equal by saying: 'Well, old chap, how are you this morning?' But to an inferior he would say: 'Well, Mr. So-and-so, how are you this morning?' A gentleman is always polite, Gan!"

Gan Waga gave a serious nod, and listened to the rest in silence, and then bowed to the prince with his hand on his heart.

"I awfulness oblige to yo', Ching. I means to yo' Highness," he said. "I think I gotted it now. Yo' Highness will be dreadfuls prouds of me!"

"I don't think!" chuckled Ching Lung. "But I'll hope for the best. I don't want to put you down, Gan, but it's not so easy to be a real gent, my fat son."

(There will be another long, thrilling instalment of our grand adventure serial next week.)

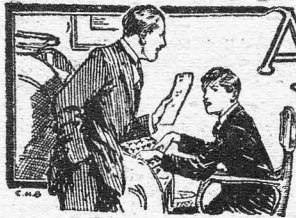


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"A MUG'S GAME!"

By Owen Conquest.

That is the title of the next story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, and it deals with

the fall from grace of Valentine Mornington, who had recently changed his ways for the better. Val gives way to sudden temptation, and in next week's issue of the "Popular" you will learn how he fares.

BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY

will appear as usual in the centre of next issue, and is set down as a SPECIAL NEW YEAR NUMBER. Readers are assured of many a hearty laugh when they read this supplement.

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This week I am offering TWO splendid Match Footballs, and TWENTY prizes of Five Shillings each in connection with "Poptets" Competition No. 47. Here is a grand chance for you to win one of these grand prizes. Don't delay! Send in your "Poptets" now!

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Examples for this week:

- | | |
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| Glorious Christmas. | Get Ready When. |
| Welcoming Plum Pudding. | Noisy Juniors. |
| Successful Booby Trap. | Leading the Way. |
| What Bullies Get. | Complaining Unnecessarily. |
| Everybody Very Satisfied. | Always Taking Credit. |
| | A Failure When Causes Much Regret. |

Select two of the examples, and make up a sentence of TWO, THREE, or FOUR words having some bearing on the example. ONE of the words in your sentence must commence with one of the letters in the example.

- All "Poptets" must be written on one side of a POSTCARD, and not more than two "Poptets" can be sent in by one reader each week.
- The postcards must be addressed "Poptets" No. 47, The "Popular," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.
- No correspondence may be entered into in connection with "Poptets."
- The Editor's opinion on any matter which may arise is to be accepted as final and legally binding. This condition will be strictly enforced, and readers can only enter the competition on this understanding.
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